

RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN IGANNA:

A study of the changing relations of production  
in an agricultural community in northwestern Yorubaland

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# ABSTRACT      Marc Schiltz

Rural-urban migration in Iganna: a study of the changing relations of production in an agricultural community in northwestern Yorubaland

This thesis focuses on rural-urban migration in Iganna, an ancient Yoruba kingdom located fifty miles west of Oyo in Nigeria.

The fieldwork on which this thesis is based took place in Iganna and partly in Ibadan and Lagos between April 1974 and October 1975.

The central hypothesis which is put forward in the thesis is that the present-day rural exodus to the urban centres (especially by young people) cannot adequately be accounted for in terms of a "quest for money" explanation, or, more generally, in terms of formal maximisation theories. The root of this problem, it is argued, lies in the radical changes in the relations of production within the traditional kin-based household units since the inclusion of farm produce in long-distance trade, with the result that farmers become increasingly dependent on/indebted to the middle traders (these are usually their womenfolk) and the hired labourers (these are men from outside Yorubaland). Inherent in this quantitative expansion of commercial farming is a qualitative decrease in social solidarity in the more traditional Yoruba rural communities.

The first part of the thesis examines the present-day migration phenomenon as it presents itself in Iganna. While the town has been drained of large numbers of its young people who have been emigrating to the cities since the 1950s, immigration into the area has taken place by Yoruba farmers from other towns, by Fulani pastoralists and by farm labourers from outside Yorubaland.

Interviews and questionnaire results concerning the reasons for emigration reveal that most people hold the opinion that there is no money in farming, while emigration to the cities holds the promise of a better and more affluent life.

Research into the occupations and living conditions of the people concerned, however, did not fully support such explanations. In the cities the majority of the Iganna migrants live in relative poverty, while in Iganna there are farmers, albeit mainly non-native, who realise good money returns in cash-cropping; although it is true that the majority of the Iganna farmers are chronically hard-up for money.

In the second part of the thesis the system of agricultural production in Iganna is examined with a view to finding out

why it is unrewarding. A model of the traditional system of agricultural production is presented which explains how farmer-householders used to exert control both over the allocation of their produce and over their dependent co-producers.

An analysis is made of the modern changes in agricultural production which were triggered off by the inclusion of farm produce in the external trade with the distant urban markets.

In the new system of production farmers no longer depend on their chiefs as patrons and creditors. Instead, their women-folk who have now become the middle traders in farm produce provide them with credit. Farmers can no longer obtain the assistance of their own household dependants, especially sons and debt-labourers, in order to increase their production. Instead they have to pay for the services of migrant labourers. Hence farmers tend to find themselves socially at the loser's end of the modern system of production, even when they make profits.

While the traditional town environment in Iganna tends to disguise these reversed relations of production, it also inhibits farmers from modernising their system of production. At the same time Government policies and initiatives with regard to agriculture have usually proved to be inadequate in coming to grips with the real conditions in which agricultural production is caught in the rural areas. Hence the discrepancies between present-day agricultural production and the rapid social changes in most other domains tend to become more pronounced as time goes on, thus precipitating the large-scale emigration from the rural towns like Iganna to the cities.



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## PREFACE

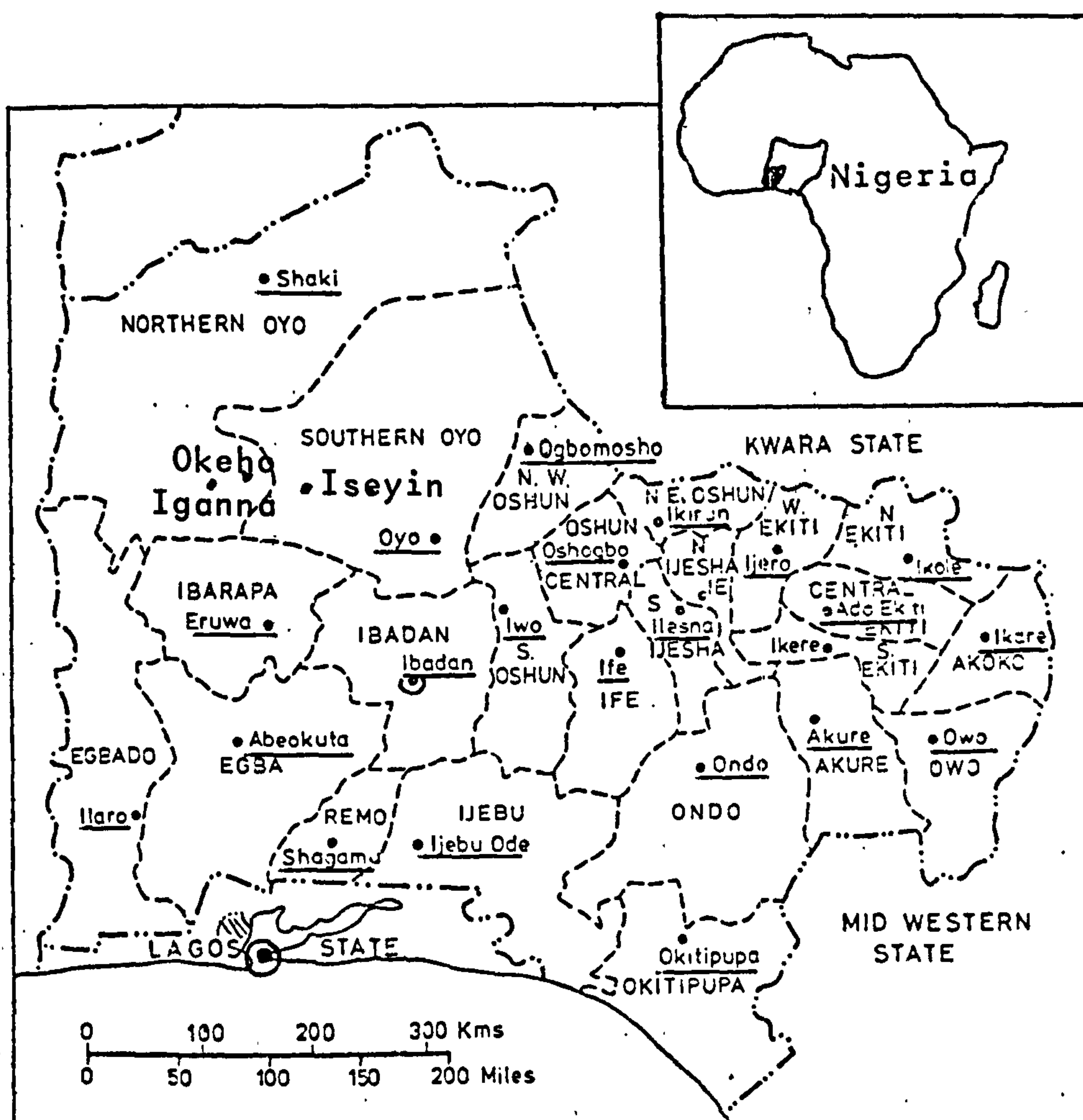
The fieldwork on which this thesis is based was conducted between April 1974 and October 1975, mainly in Iganna but also partly in Ibadan and Lagos.

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Map 1. Southwestern Nigeria: Iganna in relation to main centres and administrative divisions



## INTRODUCTION

### 1. The problem .

In this thesis I examine the general topic of rural-urban migration with reference to Iganna, a predominantly agricultural community in northwestern Yorubaland located some fifty miles west of Oyo (see map 1). More precisely, the purpose of this study is to try to account for the modern migration phenomenon in Iganna by relating it to the processes of social change which have taken place in that part of Nigeria in the course of this century.

This approach will not assume that modern migration is simply a behavioural response on the part of certain Igannans to external factors of change related to the new macro order (the creation of the modern nation-state, the emergence of urban centres and so on); instead, large-scale emigration will be investigated as a process generated within the changing rural community under specific socio-historic conditions. How these processes have developed both within and without Iganna, and what ongoing effects they have, will form the major object of the analysis.

Although Igannans have been moving southwards to the rapidly developing urban centres of Abeokuta, Ibadan and Lagos since the beginning of the colonial era in the 1890s, from the 1950s this urban-bound emigration has been gaining considerable momentum<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, different categories of people were now migrating. Whereas the early waves included former slaves as well as freeborn Igannans who for various reasons preferred life in the cities as traders and artisans to being farmers in Iganna, in the last three decades the majority of the migrants have been young people of both sexes, in their late teens and early twenties. Population estimates in the mid-70s suggest that out of c.19,000 Igannans, c.4000 have become urban migrants, mostly in Ibadan and Lagos.

The effects of this absence of young people are multiple. Since traditionally most Igannans live off the land (men cultivating farm plots in the bush and women processing and marketing the crops, often alongside various other craft and trade specialisations), agricultural production has been especially affected by the youth exodus. This is most noticeable in the domestic sphere, where householder-farmers are no longer able to draw on the labour of their unmarried sons and daughters as in the past. Moreover, most young Igannans nowadays have a profound dislike for farming, which they view as menial and unrewarding.

Although migrants usually maintain links with their people in Iganna, there is so far no clear evidence on which to base a prediction that the migrants will ultimately return home. The contrary seems to be the case: the longer migrants reside in the urban environments, the more estranged they become from their rural backgrounds. Their children who grow up in the cities become even further estranged, showing no inclination whatsoever of eventually settling in Iganna.

Iganna migrants in the cities are to be found mainly among the masses of self-employed petty-traders and artisans (cobblers, tailors, carpenters, photographers) as well as among the low-bracket wage earners (factory workers, drivers, office messengers). Some migrants have moved into the more affluent urban strata (as white-collar workers, contractors, merchants), but these are a small minority. But whatever their income bracket the bulk of the migrants prefers life in the cities to a return to Iganna.

In spite of the general disaffection with farming, especially among the young, agricultural production in the area has intensified, becoming more and more geared to cashcropping for the distant urban markets where rapidly increasing populations have led to increased demands for foodstuffs from the rural hinterlands. Indices of this commercialisation of farming in the Iganna area include the presence of many non-natives who have moved into the farming district surrounding Iganna town (such as Yoruba farmers from other towns, Fulani pastoralists



and farm labourers from outside Yorubaland); the development of nine periodic farm markets around Iganna town since the 1950s; and the daily traffic of transporters and farm produce traders (usually the local farmers' womenfolk) engaged in channelling foodstuffs to the cities.

Does this commercialisation of agriculture mean that Igannans should be categorised as a peasantry? Following Kroeber (1948) and Wolf (1955), Redfield summarises thus:

Those peoples are to be included in the cluster I shall call peasants who have at least this in common: their agriculture is a way of life, not a business for a profit. We might say that those agriculturalists who carry on agriculture for reinvestment and business, looking on the land as capital and commodity, are not peasants but farmers. (1960:18).

But as Kahn has noted

The term 'peasant society' is an extremely imprecise one... This is a result of the fact that most definitions rely on what amounts to epiphenomenal criteria to distinguish peasant society from other social stypes. Often mere geographical criteria (urban v. rural) are used in the definition. Occasionally the peasant economy is distinguished according to what is produced (i.e. foodstuffs, agricultural goods) rather than how these goods are produced. (1978:112).

These divergent opinions are coupled with theoretical differences on which I shall comment later. Nevertheless, in a complex society such as present-day Nigeria it is commonly accepted, as convenient shorthand if not on strictly theoretical grounds, to refer to rural cultivators who sell part of their produce for cash as "peasants". But as I shall discuss in Chapter V, already in pre-colonial times Igannans were cash croppers, albeit on a much smaller scale, long-distance trade in farm produce not having developed yet. In that sense they might have conformed to Faller's (1961) definition of African cultivators as "proto-peasants", whereas present-day independent Yoruba smallholders are referred to by Williams (1974) as "middle peasants".

The Yoruba term for a man who grows crops is agbe, while cultivated land is oko. The current English equivalents of these terms in Yorubaland are "farmer" and "farm". Given the nebulous theoretical status of the term "peasant" at present, I shall, like Beer (1976), use both this and "farmer" interchange-



ably to describe Yoruba agricultural cultivators. At the same time, a recognition of a definite process of "peasantisation" which distinguishes these cultivators from non-agricultural producers and capitalist farmers will be implicit in my analysis.

A few themes have been hinted at as a starting point to the development of a line of enquiry sufficiently broad to account for the complexities in the migratory phenomena (as, for instance, the intensification of agricultural production, inspite of the youth exodus; the poor remuneration of urban employment, inspite of claims that it is pursued because it is more lucrative than farming; and the relatively late development of steady migration in Iganna, which unlike most other rural towns has been almost exclusively urban-bound). Not only the breadth but the direction of the enquiry will thus be shaped: ultimately the intention will be to discover a correlation between the commercialisation of agriculture (that is, the inclusion of agricultural produce into the external trade) and the total of migratory phenomena, both towards and away from Iganna.

In order to situate this approach ethnographically and thematically more fully, and explore some of the issues it raises with regard to Yoruba ethnography and migration in Africa, as well as for theories of social change and rural-urban development in general, some of the relevant literature on these topics will now be reviewed.

## 2. The Analysis of Migration: Methodology

Studies on migration have been mainly concerned with four types of questions: who migrates? why? what are the patterns of flow and direction of movement? what are the consequences of migration? (Mangalam, 1968:15). Clearly I shall have to investigate each of these questions at various points of the discussion; but the main focus of this analysis, in accordance with the line of enquiry outlined earlier, will centre on causes and consequences of emigration (that is, questions two and four above).

May and Skeldon (1977) observe that migration studies in general are notorious for their failure to come up with any satisfactory explanations of migratory phenomena, owing to their marked lack of theoretical orientation. They cite Germani (1965) that, given the complex nature of migration, any adequate explanation must consider at least three levels of causation, viz. the objective, the normative and the psychosocial.

The objective level involves an analysis of the structural characteristics of the places of origin and destination of migration: the resource base, employment opportunities, availability of housing and services....etc. The normative level concerns the way the migrant groups perceive the migratory process and the institutionalised attitudes which can facilitate or retard migration, while the psychosocial level deals with the various factors which cause particular individuals to migrate (1977:14).

Clearly these three levels overlap and may not be considered as quite independent of one another; however, failure to distinguish them analytically has led to a neglect of the first and second and an exaggerated treatment of the third. It is on this exaggerated concern with individual migrants' decisions in situations of choice that Samir Amin's (1974:85ff.) critique of "conventional" approaches to migration dwells. First he argues that so-called "rational" economic choice and notably the migrant's decision to leave his place of origin is completely predetermined by the overall strategy determining the "allocation of factors". The inadequacy of the conventional approach Amin sees as lying in the assumption that the "factors" of production (labour, capital, natural resources and land) are given a priori and geographically unequally distributed; whereas, he argues, this distribution of "factors" (especially of capital, which is far more mobile than labour) is primarily the result of a strategy of development in the interests of the powers that be (whether colonial, national or multinational. See for instance the development of coastal areas to suit colonial economic interests, irrespective of the location of a potential labour pool in the colony).

Secondly, Amin also rejects the other conventional premise that "the migrants are individuals who migrate because they are attracted by better remuneration for their work elsewhere" (ibid.:89). This he sees as typical of the marginalist



ideology and its tendency to analyse economic problems in terms of relationships between the individual and nature instead of relationships between individuals organised in a structured society and involved in a struggle with nature.

These individualist-behavioural approaches have led to the formulation of a number of models of population movement based on wage or income differentials. Todaro's functionalist model of urban migration as a self-regulating system, described by May and Skeldon (1977:16) as the most analytically refined of this group of models, is nevertheless wanting. Todaro (1969, 1971) claims to explain the rural-urban migratory phenomena by ascribing the motivation of migration to the migrant. He considers the decision to migrate to be the function of two variables: the gap in real income between the city and the country, and the probability of being employed in the city. Thus Todaro believes he can predict that urban migration will fall off as urban unemployment rises (Amin, in 1974:90, predicts this without a model: migrants are rational, and are bound to head for areas where they have a better chance of success). May and Skeldon (1977:17) have criticised the Todaro model for failing to deal adequately with non-wage urban income (a very pertinent point in the case of Iganna migrants, most of whom belong to the informal urban sector). Further, the model assumes that migrants' decision making is constant over time and space, and does not take into consideration other (non-economic) variables (prestige, fears of witchcraft, etc.). Implicit in the model is the assumption that the migrant has the information to weigh rationally the economic pros and cons of moving to the city, while evidence from Iganna and elsewhere suggests on the contrary that few migrants have any clear idea of what they will have to face in the city. Moreover, weighing rural incomes against urban incomes is a most elusive exercise, not only because of the vagaries of farming and other forms of self-employment, but also because of the different obligations each environment will impose.

Amin concludes his critique of the individualist-behavioural approaches by showing how economic marginalism resembles individualist functionalism in sociology in its attempts to discover



the laws of the economy by observing the behaviour of Homo Economicus, not considering that such behaviour is produced by the system within which the individual makes his choice. Moreover, processes are cumulative, as in the case of migration: when individuals decide to migrate they assist the very process of unequal development, "reproducing the same conditions and contributing in this manner to their aggravation" (1974:93).

Amin's critique is from a neo-Marxist perspective: observed human behaviour, far from forming the base of the analysis, is itself accounted for via the analysis of the mode of production characterising a given social formation (see 1974: 89, 103, *passim*). As such his critique, like that of A.G. Frank (1969), is largely directed at the monopolistic tendencies of capitalism, mainly in the form of multi-national corporations which, they argue, perpetuate the structures of under-development. This is the case especially in the Third World, where underdevelopment, far from being caused by unfavourable internal factors, is a consequence of development in the richer countries. Development in the metropolis then results from a progressive underdevelopment of the periphery. Hence the "metropolitan-satellite" syndrome as analysed by Frank, Baran (1957), Cardoso and Faletto (1970), otherwise known as the "dependency" theory or sociology of underdevelopment, has asserted itself in radical contrast to the neo-evolutionary "modernisation" models or development sociology of Smelser (1964), Hoselitz (1960), Eisenstadt (1966, 1970) and Rostow (1964).

On the weaknesses of both approaches there exists a vast body of literature. The most basic criticism seems to be that the concept of development has never been clearly defined (Long 1977:3); neither has its opposite, "underdevelopment", been given any analytic content, as Bernstein writes:

The utopian conception describes what is ("underdevelopment") through a vision of what ought to be ("development") which provides a moralistic critique of capitalism (1978).

The processes of structural differentiation and integration as outlined by Smelser, for example, in the case of small-scale communities becoming part of new nations, may offer a useful analytic framework for empirical research. However, as Long



observes

The structural differentiation model of development gives analytical priority to the effects of exogenous factors in promoting change in the Third World; and uses an ideal-type characterisation of "traditional" societies which over-emphasises their internal coherence, homogeneity, and stability (1977:32).

These, indeed, are the same criticisms which in social anthropology have been levelled at the Radcliffe-Brownian tradition of structural functionalism (see, for instance, Leach's critique in 1954:4).

In order to get away from the statics implicit in consensus models anthropologists have in more recent years endeavoured to find alternative theoretical models to account for internally generated change in the societies they study. In this connection Kahn (1978:111) credits the dependency approach with having stimulated anthropologists to look at old concerns with new eyes. He cites in particular the growing awareness among anthropologists of the importance of relating findings in small scale societies to the total social structure of which these societies constitute a fraction. Also the concept of "tradition", so dear to earlier generations of cultural anthropologists, is now found elusive and misleading in the face of the complex and often turbulent changes taking place in the societies under study.

Taking up earlier criticisms of Frank formulated by Laclau (1971), viz. that he fails to define at all precisely what he means by "capitalism", Kahn explains that this is because Frank has confused concepts and systems of an entirely different order; what is important is

to distinguish between neo-colonialism on the one hand, and the capitalist mode of production on the other. The former, when used theoretically, refers to a system of domination between different elements in a social formation (1978:111).

So to Marxist critiques Frank's sweeping statements about the so-called dependent periphery reveal a lack of understanding of how different modes of production are articulated. To clarify this point we must first clarify the twin concepts of "social formation" and "mode of production". The two concepts are developed by Marx in his Contribution to the Critique of



Political Economy of 1859, where he concisely outlines his materialist view of history. In the preface he says:

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The totality of these relations of production constitute the economic structure of society - the real foundation, on which legal and political superstructures arise and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life.

For Marx, then, production of human subsistence constitutes the basis of society; "But to understand the determinance of the base", O'Laughlin comments,

it is necessary to comprehend the importance Marx assigns to the concept of reproduction. In social production people not only produce but also reproduce the conditions of their own existence (1975:349).

Also in the Critique, Marx uses the expression "social formation" when he goes on to talk about the succession of modes of production:

No social formation ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society.

The concept of the social formation may therefore be said to refer to the totality of social relations which make up a particular form of society. Moreover this "form" is not static but in the constant process of becoming<sup>2</sup>. Thus social formations have their historical moments - "instances" - but are not confined by the boundaries of nation states, and nation states not geographically contiguous may share in the same social formation. By the same token, to the extent that the metropolitan-periphery syndrome of dependency theory is conceived in spatial terms, it cannot be considered coterminous with the concept of a social formation.

The social relations within a social formation include, in addition to those of the economic base, also the superstructural ones which mediate in reproducing the social system. Within this totality of social relations, two or more sets of productive relations may interact, one dominated by the other



(Kahn 1978:112)<sup>3</sup>. Each set will be related to a different historical epoch, but at any given time the analyst will be confronted with more than one, and must identify them as well as discover their mode of articulation.

Research on pre-capitalist modes of production in Africa can be found in the seminal studies of Coquery-Vidrovitch (1976), Terray (1972), Meillassoux (1972) and Rey (1973), but so far their findings have been inconclusive and subject to ongoing debate (see review by O'Laughlin, 1975). More directly related to the controversy over the underdevelopment theory there has been Kahn's (1978) research on "petty commodity mode of production" where he analyses how a peasant economy may be dominated and reproduced through its relation to international capitalism. While Kahn is rigorous in his application of Marxist concepts to define a neo-colonial social formation, Amin's (1974b, 1976) attempts at defining a "peasant mode of production" reveal a lack of analytical consistency. Hence also, according to Bernstein, Amin's failure to characterise theoretically the peripheral formations. "These general characteristics", Bernstein comments, "are not theoretically specified, but are empirical generalisations (and of a low order)" (1978:14).

This review has helped to illustrate the general theoretical disorientation in the areas of change, development and underdevelopment, and modern migration. It is well worth considering, however, that the inadequacies or misconceptions marring general theoretical models may be corrected by new case studies, where new insights will enable researchers to test the validity of their methodological approaches and theoretical propositions. I therefore disagree with Amin's statement in his critique of the conventional approaches to the study of migration in West Africa that

individual motivations are known; their "revelation" by a sociological survey results in nothing but platitudes (1974:92).

Even if such a sweeping statement were directed at formalist-marginalist assumptions that socio-economic systems can be explained in terms of human behaviour it would still be unwarranted, for its rigorous application would stifle both field research and the dialectical method of enquiry characteristic



of Marxist scholarship (under which umbrella Amin stands).

Concerning the first risk O'Laughlin writes

a considerable portion of Marxist scholarship on non-capitalist systems is concerned with determining the extent to which concepts that Marx developed for the analysis of capitalism can or cannot be applied to all modes of production. The only scientific solution to this problem is the movement back from theory to data in order to see how well the concrete can be determined by the abstractions one has developed (1975:351-2).

Clearly this concerns the anthropologist, who as participant-observer engages in the detailed recording of human interaction, peasant or other. To return to Amin's damning of sociological surveys: the fact that motivations revealed by the survey appear to be masking real reasons, as Amin has rationalised, is no reason for doing away with the survey; rather the contrary. Social systems are not empirically observable entities, as every student of society knows; consequently an understanding of the real reasons for migration must of necessity involve a process of "unmasking" and abstraction from the observed, concrete reality of human interaction. As Leach says, "when the anthropologist attempts to describe a social system he necessarily describes only a model of the social reality" (1954:8).

With regard to the risk of stifling the dialectical method of enquiry, it is worth noting the importance Godelier (1972:28) attaches to marginalist economic theory for solving a number of real problems despite the theory's inadequacies. The inadequacies he summarises as follows:

Marginalism, indeed, takes as its point of departure the behaviour of individuals, sets forth a formal definition of what is economic, eliminates the problem of scientific analysis of social needs by contenting itself with statistical cognition of individual preferences, all added together, among which it seeks to isolate a collective scale of satisfactions so as to define the conditions of social welfare. Finally, and most important, marginalism with the theory of "factorial incomes" breaks down before the central problem of capitalist economic rationality - the problem of the origin and essence of capitalist profit and of the value of commodities (ibid.).

Despite this radical critique, Godelier concedes that due to the special attention given to the relations between supply and demand in the formation of prices in situations of competition, marginalism provides some knowledge of part of the mechanism of price formation. This is achieved "inasmuch as



the category of price is more complex than that of value, because it reflects both cost of production and the relation between supply and demand" (ibid.; see also p.296). Instances such as this show not only that one may learn from one's opponents in academia, but most importantly the methodological validity of testing inadequate propositions. By following through the rationalisations of a particular line of discourse (whether commonsensical or scientific) until its logical conclusions come into conflict with other lines of discourse, concrete strategies or historical processes, the complexities and particularities of a concrete social environment will come to light.

The relevance of my disagreement with Amin's statement about "platitudes" will be demonstrated more fully in chapters II, III and IV. These, as well as chapter I, pursue a double objective. First, rural-urban migration in Iganna is extensively documented, the specific socio-spatial context in which it occurs being ethnographically and quantitatively made explicit, as far as the data permit, while similarities and dissimilarities with migratory phenomena elsewhere provide material for comparative analysis. Secondly, the formalist-marginalist hypothesis explaining migration, paraphrased here as "the quest for money" explanation, is tested, although known in advance to be inadequate. This a priori knowledge is not simply the outcome of theoretical deduction or ideological prejudice; data from most studies on migration, including even purely empirical studies, have amply demonstrated how the wider social implications of this phenomenon defy explanations in economic terms only. In Europe this has been clearly documented in the case of Basque farmers who migrate to urban areas even though market gardening brings in relatively high money returns (Greenwood 1976); in Papua New Guinea, Marilyn Strathern stresses time and again in her study of Hageners in Port Moresby that "statements about money are as much a matter of ideology (relating behaviour to certain values) as of economics" (1977:261), and in any case "we should not necessarily take consequences for causes; nor peoples' economic-style explanations ("we are in town to earn money") for personal motives" (ibid.:247); closer to Iganna, Olusanya's (1969) survey of emigration in three Yoruba farm villages



arrives at a similarly negative conclusion, viz. that the "quest for money" explanation is an inadequate one.

Certainly individual decisions by migrants aimed at maximising the best possible returns in situations of choice (i.e. whether to migrate to A or B, or to stay at home) are all observable economic strategies. That these motivations are important in explaining migrants' strategies is not disputed, although it is believed that a more adequate explanation will require a different approach; but the real gains of enquiring into these factors of motivation (which include non-economic ones such as desire for prestige or furthering one's education, desire to escape from lineage constraints, etc.) is that special insights will be obtained into the mechanisms of external relations, as well as into the process of change specific to the society under study. This is because the interactions of migrants within their environments of migration are far more complex (being related to the macro-order of the wider society) than their interactions exclusively at the level of the local community. Moreover, studying people's behaviour outside their home community may reveal aspects of the social system of that community which would not otherwise so easily come to light. For this reason anthropologists studying small scale communities should as a matter of principle include within their research such external phenomena as migration, trade, or national politics, even if this is not strictly speaking what they have gone out to study<sup>4</sup>.

The "push-pull" concept is a popular one for explaining the mechanism of migration when seen as a result of decision making by migrants. "Push" factors are the pressures on individuals to move out of their habitual places of residence; "pull" factors are the enticements drawing migrants into particular environments. A simple schema of this "push-pull" mechanism has been outlined by Lee (1966). In the place of residence, negative impulses inhibit individuals from moving, while positive impulses pressurise them to leave. Similarly, numerous positive and negative impulses emanate from different potential destinations. The decision to move or not to move results, ultimately, from the evaluation of all these factors, the objectivity



of which is always impaired by various kinds of conditioning and bias.

Mabogunje has criticised this line of enquiry, which is usually pursued by questionnaire methods.

What the questionnaire does, in fact, is to suggest to the migrant a set of equally plausible reasons, besides the obvious one of coming to earn extra income (1970:11).

Mabogunje's critique is levelled not so much at economic marginalist theory as at specifically the methodology of the "push-pull" model for failing to include all the variables relating to the migration phenomenon. While conceding that the findings of "push-pull" analysis may have explanatory value at the aggregate level, he offers an alternative model which presents migration as a spatial phenomenon that can be analysed within the framework of General Systems Theory. Although such models can account for complex processes of change, the fact that the system is said to operate within a set environment gives it a rather mechanistic self-regulating look (see W. Buckley, 1967, on social cybernetics). As in the case of the "push-pull" model, I consider the major value of these approaches to lie at the level of methodology, both as providing a guiding framework for enquiries at the time of fieldwork and as initial analyses situating data on migration in their ethnographic context. In other words recorded data should be allowed to speak for themselves until the point is reached when fuller explanation requires a more extensive body of information (especially historical), and an alternative conceptual model which would situate human behaviour within the social framework in which it is produced.

This need for a more in-depth societal explanation will lead on in Part II of the thesis to an analysis of the socio-economic changes before and after the youth exodus to the cities.

Methodologically, the analysis of changes in the system of agricultural production (of which this exodus forms an integral part) will be considered at two distinct although closely connected levels. First its organisation will be looked at historically; this will include a description of demographic and environmental conditions, farming technology, agricultural cycle, crops produced and tasks performed, the organisation of

the various productive units, the labour pool, labour time and time needed to produce, skills, technological and educational innovations, the types and mechanisms of market and non-market exchanges, and so on. This line of analysis which for Marxists comes under the rubric of "forces of production" must do more than merely enumerate articles and commodities produced; above all it must identify the ways in which these are produced (O'Laughlin 1975:361).

Secondly, changes in the system of agricultural production will be considered at the level of social organisation; that is, in the ways in which people (direct producers as much as non-producers) enter into relations of domination-dependence with one another. Although such relations may be largely predicated by custom, kinship status, and rank, with their corresponding bundles of rights and duties, it would be a mistake to take this for granted without investigating how in concrete situations relations of interdependence are established in relation to the system of production. Also, in times of rapid change these relations of interdependence may undergo a radical shift which may remain disguised for a long time, since formal structures of domination and their corresponding ideologies are usually much slower to change.

This second level corresponds to the concept of "relations of production" in Marxist analysis. Godelier describes these relations as

the relations between men - no matter which - which fulfill the triple function of:

- a. determining the social form of access to resources and of the control of the means of production;
- b. redistributing the labour force of society's members among the different labour processes and organising these different processes;
- c. determining the social form of the circulation and distribution of the products of individual or collective labour (Godelier, 1978).

A less scholastic approach than that of most Marxist anthropologists to the analysis of what is conceptualised as "relations of production" is outlined by Bourdieu in the last chapter of his Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977). Drawing extensively on his fieldwork in Kabylia Bourdieu analyses how relations of



personal dependence typical of pre-capitalist social formations are articulated and reproduced through the interconvertibility of symbolic and material capital. The relevance of Bourdieu's approach will be discussed at length in chapter V, in an attempt to avoid the excessive "theoreticism" of some Marxists and to gain a better understanding of the qualitative changes brought about by shifts in the relations of production.

In the hypothesis that follows I shall attempt to sum up my theoretical position and state the line of argument I intend to pursue in this thesis in order to account for the phenomenon of rural-urban migration in Iganna.

### 3. The Hypothesis

The present day rural exodus (especially by young people) from Iganna to the urban centres cannot adequately be accounted for in terms of a "quest for money" explanation, or more generally in terms of formal maximisation and marginalist theories in economics. Instead it is argued that the modern migration phenomenon in Iganna is both result and cause of radical changes in the relations of production, in that since the inclusion of farm produce in long-distance trade as a direct correlate of twentieth century urban growth Iganna farmers have become increasingly dependent on/indebted to the middle traders (who are usually their womenfolk) and hired labourers (who are men from outside Yorubaland).

Culturally, however, the true nature of these radically changed social relations of production remains largely obscured by the persistence of many customary forms of interaction as well as many indigenous norms, values and institutions (asa ibile).

Inherent in this quantitative expansion of commercialised agriculture is a qualitative decrease in social solidarity in the Iganna community.

The analysis will not make value judgements about whether urban growth and rural depopulation are desirable and inevitable; rather, conclusions will be drawn from insights gained in the analysis of the changing relations of production which will suggest that, given the dominant trend towards capitalist development in Nigerian society as a whole, the more the Iganna smallholder increases production for profit the more he tends to lose socially by becoming increasingly estranged from his own dependants on the one hand and increasingly

dependent on outsiders (labourers and traders) on the other. In this way he also contributes to the reproduction of the conditions underlying emigration.

This hypothesis does not pretend to provide full answers to the many questions raised by the modern migration phenomenon; nevertheless it is my contention that this approach to the study of rural-urban migration will offer new insights into the nature of present day changes in the agrarian sector of northwestern Yorubaland, which is characterised by rural depopulation and stunted development.

#### 4. The Fieldwork Situation

As it is customary for anthropologists to describe their research methods and the conditions under which they carried out fieldwork, it will be appropriate to clarify first the rather unusual situation in which I found myself in Iganna.

As a former member of a Catholic missionary institute (White Fathers) from which I resigned ("emigrated") in 1976, the eighteen months of fieldwork on migration in Iganna (1974-5) marked the end of a rather long journey through Yorubaland which I had the privilege to round off exactly where I had set my first faltering steps some twelve years previously.

On my arrival in the Catholic diocese of Oyo in December 1962 I spent the first six months in Iganna studying the Yoruba language. Within the former Oyo Province the Iganna area was then very much regarded as the "far west" frontier where life was said to be far more "traditionally Yoruba" than in the boisterous towns of Ife, Ilesha, Oshogbo and Ibadan. Though my first impressions of thatched mud houses, colourful markets and drummers very much concurred with this view, it was the glamorous appearance of young Iganna migrants showing off their Lagos fineries during the New Year celebrations of 1962-3 which impressed itself most on my memory. More than a decade later I was still sufficiently intrigued by these contrasts to pick up these threads and weave them into a more systematic



critique of the myth of a pristine Yoruba culture, supposedly unchanging until the advent of Western "civilisation".

After the initial Iganna language exercise I had a spell of six months parish work in Otan-Aiyegbaju followed by a year in Ogbomosho. From here I moved to the parish of Inisha, where an old rusty cannon stands by the bank of the river Otin, a constant reminder of the 1896 battle which finally routed the Ilorin cavalry. The six years spent here were undoubtedly those of my most intensive personal involvement in the fascinating world of the Yoruba people, with experiences ranging from running a folk opera company in Oyan (with Mr. Thomas Adekansola) and being installed as chief Ariwajoye in Illa-Odo. These were also the tragic and turbulent post-Independence years, climaxing in the civil war over Biafra and the newly tapped oil resources.

Apart from two short field trips to Iseyin (1972) and Ifewara (1973), most of my time between October 1971 and April 1974 was spent at University College London where I trained in Anthropology. Setting out for the Iganna field afterwards, where I was to study migration, was somehow like returning home to a people whose language I spoke fluently and in whose customs and culture I had already taken root.

The Iganna Catholic Church is located just outside the southern town periphery along the road to Awaiye, at the former site of the Ifa sacred grove (now moved to the western town periphery - see map 2). At the mission Father Jan Hamelijnck, the then resident parish priest for the towns from Okeho to Wasimi-Aiyegun on the Nigerian-Benin border, proved to be the ideal host and companion in the course of my fieldwork. During the week I devoted all my time to research work, while on weekends I took part in the parish tasks of visiting the Catholic communities in the neighbouring towns. But since congregations were small and visits lasted from Saturday through to Monday I had ample opportunities to get to know the local people, record the town histories, document the important orisa cults, explore abandoned settlements on the surrounding hills, and more generally compare findings on migration, farming, local politics, development

projects, etc.

My time in Iganna was taken up by a variety of activities. In the early stages I combined random data collecting on migration with recording the histories of the various descent groups (idile). In the course of this I soon began to establish friendly relations with the Sabiganna, his chiefs and the townspeople generally. As lineage histories make important statements about people's ancestors, rights to titled offices, land and ritual property, some elders showed an initial reluctance to narrate these stories to me. But after a while, when it got round that after recording a story and playing it back to those who had told it I would transcribe it verbatim in Yoruba and give a type written copy to the narrators, more and more lineage elders began to show interest in my work and insist that I record their histories.

Priests of Orisa cults and custodians of shrines and masks showed a similar initial reluctance to let me in on the most revered patrimonies of their illustrious idile; but once they heard that I always returned copies, i.e. texts and photographs of whatever I recorded, I began to receive more invitations to attend rituals and festivals than I could at times cope with. With senior Babalawo (Ifa divination priests) I would sometimes even indulge in stimulating theological dialogues.

In all this work I enjoyed the relentless assistance of Mr. Joseph Okedokun, an Iganna tailor. Though he had never had the opportunity to attend school he had become literate in Yoruba. His personal integrity, combined with discretion and sound judgement, made him acceptable to young and old. He was invaluable as advisor and public relations man; talking to people, introducing me to individuals or associations, offering personal briefings on complex and often sensitive town affairs and helping to keep a day-to-day record of all that went on in Iganna: births, deaths, rituals, weddings, disputes, visits by Government officials, and many others. This he kept up for several months after my return to London.

As time went on many others became involved in my research;



students from the seminary who had been sent out to the parishes, to familiarise themselves with the rural people were skilful in interviewing craftsmen and traders, and also helped me conduct a head count of daily commuters between the town and the outlying farms; grammar school girls on holiday conducted interviews with market women and tried their hand at recording daily diets and food expenses in farmers' households.

Finding people to write their life stories and/or personal diaries proved more difficult. Nevertheless I received some good responses, including one from an Iganna farmer-trader and two from young men, one living in Ibadan and the other in Lagos. The most prolific writer was undoubtedly Mr. Julius Adebayo from Itasa, who after completing primary school had lived in Ibadan, Lagos and Kano, and after many adventures found his way back to his home town. He, also, assisted me in recording his town's history and the origins of the Ara cult there. As this involved making field trips to Save, Ketu and Ilora, for which I unfortunately had neither the time nor the travel documents, Mr. Adebayo proved himself to be a most resourceful ethnographer, successfully finding his way into Benin and carrying out the research. After my return to London he too has been a regular correspondent, answering further queries which arose during the writing up stages.

Much of my work in Iganna centred on agricultural production. As the farming district around the town stretches out many miles in all directions, I was fortunate to have the use of Father Hamelijnck's motorcycle, by means of which I could reach the most inaccessible corners of the bush. Though this trekking was pretty exhausting, the hospitality shown to me in the farming hamlets by the humble folk who are now feeding the overcrowded cities was always so warm and at times even embarrassingly appreciative of my "bothering to come and see them", that I look back on these days with much gratitude and nostalgia.

In Ibadan and Lagos, to where I made two short exploratory trips followed by a longer one lasting about a month (March-April 1975), most of my time was taken up with interviewing Iganna migrants and attending social functions and meetings of their city-based

associations. On the whole the migrants too showed great hospitality and cooperation.

Data and historical materials were also obtained from the diaries and registers of the Catholic parish files; from the National Archives in Ibadan; from Mr. Alabi, the then District Council Manager at Okeho, on local government matters; from Okeho Grammar school, where the Principal and staff kindly cooperated in a questionnaire survey on migration which was handed out to the pupils.

Thanks to the expert help of Father Hamelijnck and Mr. Okedokun I drew a detailed map of Iganna, showing every landmark from buildings to shrines and market places, with an additional list of the 400 (approx.) named compounds.

Finally, as to the question which many people have asked me of whether being a missionary can be compatible with being an anthropologist, I can only answer that in my experience I have never encountered incompatibilities in my actual dealings with the people whose social system I studied. When incompatibilities do arise, I would suspect that it is mainly at the level of Christianity and Anthropology; the former for believing that its discourse and practice are divinely inspired, and the latter for believing its own are objective-scientific.



## NOTES

1. In saying that the Iganna migrants have moved to urban centres I mean only that they have moved to distant, large nucleated settlements where they have ceased to be agricultural producers, taking instead "urban-like" occupations. The question, therefore, of what type of settlements can be regarded as urban, or what constitutes a city (which have been the object of considerable debate and ongoing research) I consider to lie outside the scope of this study, the vantage point of which will remain the rural community of Iganna. Some references, however, can be given in this note. In the field of urbanisation in Africa, Banton's West African City (1957) remains a classic. As regards Yoruba towns, Bascom (1955, 1958 and 1962) has always insisted on regarding the Yoruba as an urban people, claiming that "urbanism" as a way of life has always been characteristic of the Yoruba, while "urbanisation" as a process of change with possibly many discontinuities is more directly related to the changes which have come about in modern times. Schwab (1954, 1965) is undecided on whether to regard Oshogbo as urban, while Lloyd (1967) qualifies such towns as "scarcely urban". Krapf-Askari, in her study Yoruba Towns and Cities (1969), tries to resolve the impasse of earlier typologies by suggesting instead that
 

an urban settlement (town or city) is a large permanent densely nucleated centre of population; numerical parameters, which may have to be varied culturally can be established for all these characteristics (1969:163).

 This approach exhibits sufficient flexibility to allow for the various changes in town developments, but does not deal with the theoretical issues of present-day urbanisation phenomena (dynamics of urban growth, stratification, etc.).
2. Marx uses the word "Gesellschaftsformation", which in German expresses a process of becoming, as well as a form.
3. Further in his discussion, however, Kahn (1978:121) acknowledges that the definition of a social formation raises a number of theoretical issues which have not been resolved. On the one hand a social formation refers to a theoretical construct of two or more modes of production in a structure of dominance; on the other hand a social formation is a concrete concept used in the analysis of particular societies in specific historical periods.
4. This point is well illustrated in Turnbull's (1965) study of the Mbuti pigmies of the Ituri Forest, where the author describes in great detail the totally different modes of behaviour of the Mbuti depending on whether they roam around in the forest (which is their habitat) or have gone to live for a while with the neighbouring Bantu cultivators who are settled in clearings in the forest. Turnbull analyses these two environments as forming a structural unity, demonstrating that the social system of the Mbuti becomes fully understandable only when it is seen in relation to that of the nearby Bantu.

PART 1

RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN IGANNA







## CHAPTER I      THE IMPACT OF PRESENT-DAY MIGRATION ON THE POPULATION OF IGANNA

The main point I wish to argue under this heading is that the native residual population of Iganna is annually decreasing as a result of the accelerated out-migration in the last few decades. My analysis will force me to contradict the official census figures which clearly show population increases everywhere; sadly I shall also have to shatter the beliefs and hopes of many Iganna patriots who would like to see their hometown grow and prosper. In the course of the analysis I shall also touch on some of the following questions: What was the population figure for Iganna in 1975? How was this figure broken down into resident native population, non-native population, and Iganna descendants in distant towns? Further, do the figures for these different categories fluctuate? What is the relation between school education and emigration statistically? And what are the sex and age ratios of the Iganna migrants?

Before embarking on this analysis I must make it clear that locating the migration phenomenon demographically in a town the size of Iganna can only aim at plausible estimates. Official, relatively accurate census data and population registers of the sort one might be able to consult for a similar study in some European town are at present non-existent in Nigeria. Single-handed, the anthropologist might still be able to make his own detailed census when faced with a small village, or a sparsely populated tribal area; but in a town like Iganna, where the population under study numbers several thousand, and includes, apart from those living in the hometown and in the neighbouring hamlets, the equally large numbers living in dis-



tant urban environments, any attempt at reaching an accurate census is no longer feasible. Yet inspite of these initial drawbacks I believe that, by using various methods of quantifying available information and comparing the results thus obtained, it will be possible to reach certain estimates which, although not foolproof, are nevertheless more than simply impressionistic. As such they will also offer sufficiently reliable guidelines for the remaining sections of this study.

### 1. Official census figures versus personal estimates

When speaking about Iganna and its population we must first make it clear to what and to whom we are referring. Iganna "natives" are all those who claim descent from Iganna; this includes people whose "homes" or compounds are in Iganna town itself, but also, as we shall see, people who have moved out. Surrounding the town are extensive tracts of bush and farmland, dotted with dozens of hamlets, some consisting of only a few huts, others numbering as many as fifty. Many Iganna natives may live more or less permanently in these hamlets but still have their "real" homes in the town itself. I will always refer to these town and hamlet dwellers as the "residual population" of Iganna, irrespective of whether they actually spend most of their time in the outlying hamlets or in the town. On the other hand, when I speak about Iganna migrants I shall always mean those Iganna natives who have moved out of Iganna or its farming hamlets and are now resident in the cities or other towns.

There is, however, another way of speaking about the population of Iganna: that is, to see it as including all the people, native or non-native, who have taken up residence in the town or in its surrounding hamlets, no matter where their real homes are. Two points, then, must be emphasised in any discussion

of this sort. First , that there are many Iganna natives who have emigrated to distant towns, and who for census purposes must be clearly distinguished from the residual native population. Secondly, that among the residents of Iganna there are many non-natives. The bulk of these (apart from school teachers a few church ministers, sanitary inspectors, a midwife, a court clerk, a community development officer and barely a dozen traders and craftsmen) reside outside the town, many being Yoruba farmers from other towns. There is also a highly fluctuating category of migrant labourers from outside Yorubaland, as well as groups of Fulani herders who have established their cattle camps on a semi-permanent basis around Iganna. Among the latter we must distinguish between the more settled Fulani, whose camps are near the fringes of the town, and the more nomadic Fulani (locally referred to as Baku) who have settled at some distance from the town.

Given this situation in which most people have at least dual residence, often in different towns, one can see the enormous problem any nation-wide census is bound to face. Technically, there is the problem of making sure that people are counted only once; administratively, for each town there is the problem of inclusion and exclusion. Should people be counted in their hometowns, or in the localities where they reside most permanently? There is likely to be conflict here between official census policies, which stipulate that a person be counted where he or she works (which is also a person's most permanent home) and the people, who usually want to be counted in their towns of origin. During the census of 1973 (which I witnessed) many people from different towns did their utmost to recall their emigrant children back home for the occasion of the head count; in Iganna, many natives who had emigrated rushed back home to meet the enumerators there rather than allow themselves to be counted in Lagos, or wherever they



happened to be living. Many non-native residents in Iganna pursued similar strategies, preferring to be counted in their towns of origin. There are two reasons why people are concerned where they are counted. One is that the larger the population of a town, the more development aid it hopes to attract; the other is that high population means stronger representation in Government on return to civilian rule. Since people identify more with their towns of origin, they wish to see these gain in stature.

The political and economic implications of national censuses in Nigeria have always constituted a serious threat to the objective accurate successes of the exercise. The last two censuses in particular have caused great dissatisfaction throughout the nation, so much so that the detailed results of the 1973 census were never released<sup>1</sup>. In the case of Iganna, the 1963 census stated that the town had a population of 17,999. How much this figure had gone up by the 1973 census was never made public, but I know from reliable informants involved in the census that the figure was then fixed at between 20,000 and 21,000. This indicates a rise of more than 2,000 in ten years, and is consistent with census figures which, since the beginning of the century, have shown a steady augmentation in most of both rural and urban Yorubaland (Krapf-Askari 1969:35); but given the unreliability of the census results people have, not without serious grounds, suspected that the population figures of many towns were grossly inflated.

In spite of these problems with the census results, there are nevertheless cogent reasons for accepting the claims of many of the larger towns and urban centres that their populations have been steadily increasing. First, in the more urbanised centres where health conditions have improved greatly, the survival rate of the population has risen (Mabogunje 1962:18).



Secondly, many towns have grown larger due to the immigration from the rural areas of people who have engaged in various urban occupations (as traders, craftsmen, clerks etc.). Thirdly, these urban migrants often include many young people, among whom birth rate tends to be very high.

In contrast to this, in rural places like Iganna the survival rate does not seem to have risen very much. It is true that Iganna has benefitted from a small maternity centre staffed by a qualified midwife, and the survival rate of infants may have risen slightly; but such services are very limited, and for doctor or hospital treatment people still have to travel to Iseyin (27 miles away), or even to more distant towns. The result is that most ailments are treated locally by the more traditional methods. Conditions of hygiene and diets are on the whole still very inadequate in comparison with western standards.<sup>2</sup> This is one sort of explanation why a rise in population should not be expected. A second reason is that for almost thirty years many young people have been emigrating from the town, and only very few have returned. Consequently, for many years the town has been drained of a large proportion of its most vital and reproductive members. Thus if, as I am arguing, the numbers of the residual native population of Iganna are decreasing, but at the same time, as suggested the census figures, the overall population in the area has increased, this could only be explained by the influx of non-native farmers and pastoralists. However, my impressions from visiting most of the farming hamlets where these non-natives reside do not suggest that their numbers have increased to such an extent.

Having outlined the general observations concerning people's migrations in Iganna and the demographic results of a decreasing population, I shall now go on to substantiate the claim that there is such a decrease by examining certain quantitative



data<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. Iganna population estimates in 1975

On the basis of a small sample of six compounds where I had made a detailed census I derived the following results: the average population per compound in Iganna is about 95. As there are about two hundred compounds in Iganna, this suggests that the total population of the town lies near 19,000. The same compound census revealed that 21 percent of the people have emigrated, which meant that the number of migrants should total about 4000. This would leave the residual native population at about 15,000. If, then, the total population living in the Iganna area exceeded 20,000 (as per the 1973 census), this would mean that there are more than 5000 non-natives living in and around Iganna. I toured the area on several occasions, and although I could not make a census of the large numbers of non-natives residing in many of these farming places, the suggestion that they might be as many as 5000 is totally unacceptable. Moreover, an examination of the numbers of men paying the annual Government flat-rate tax in the area revealed that the total number of non-native men was under 1000. The number of dependants (wives and children) that these men may have staying with them is not easy to determine. The migrant labourers are usually young single men; the Fulani have their own extended family system, but their numbers are small in relation to the wider population in the area. Thus the bulk of non-native population consists of Yoruba farmers from other towns. Random counts of these people indicate that on average each migrant farmer has only about 2.5 people staying with him, as other dependants often stay behind, either in the hometown or elsewhere. Basing myself on these figures, I estimated the total non-native population in the area to be about 3000, or maybe slightly more. This would bring us to an estimated gross



break-down of the total population as represented in table 1.

Iganna natives		Non-natives residing in Iganna area
Home-based	Migrants	Fulani/Migrant labourers/Yoruba farmers
15,000	4,000	3,000

Table 1 Population estimates

### 3. Emigration

However plausible the population estimates of table 1 may have been, the fact remains that due to on-going migration and growth rates these figures keep changing. For my present argument, I shall try to indicate how the number of Iganna migrants grows, while inversely the native residual population decreases. In table 2 I take a sample of Iganna men, all members of the local Catholic church, and divide them into six age categories (not strictly corresponding to actual age groupings).

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Age categories of 169 Iganna men	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-45	45-55	55-65
Percentage of migrants	75	70	65	39	11	7
Percentage with school education	72	75	58	25	6	-

Table 2 Assessment of increasing rate of migration in Iganna area



Most of these men (apart from some in category I) are married with children. The total average emigration rate for the whole sample is 44.5 percent, which is exceptionally high and is not representative of the town as a whole; but the reason for this high percentage is not difficult to find when we consider that out of the same sample 39.3 percent had attended school. Although the Baptist church in Iganna did not keep the kind of records that would enable me to make similar calculations, I do not doubt that a sample taken from their members would have produced similar results. (It should be borne in mind that the Christian converts were the first people to send their children to primary schools, with the Muslims and especially the Olorisha<sup>4</sup> lagging behind in this respect). School education has always been a prime lever for emigration from the rural areas. This will become clearer throughout my analysis, but it would be a mistake to correlate emigration with school attendance only. Even such an atypical sample of Iganna population as that on table 2 showed convincingly that, except for group II, the number of migrants was higher than the number of those who had attended school.

Finally, the third point of interest in table 2 is the sudden increase in emigration and school attendance in section IV and more sharply in section III. The men in section III were boys in the 1950s, and many of them were already leaving Iganna. At the same time school attendance was going up, especially since in 1955 the Government of the former Western Region had started its programme of free primary education. The full impact of this programme became particularly noticeable around 1960, bringing in its wake an acceleration in emigration reflected in section III on table 2, which concerns men who were of primary school age then.

In order to obtain a more balanced view of the ratio in the



whole of Iganna between the migrants who attended school and those who did not, I shall now consider some additional data. Enquiries into the whereabouts of Iganna boys and girls who had attended primary school over the years showed that at least 90 percent of them had emigrated at one time or another. Up until 1955 the numbers of pupils who had attended school was very small; the Baptist mission school had then been in existence for seventeen years, and the Catholic mission school for only seven years. These were fee-paying schools, and very few parents were willing or able to foot the bills. Attendance registers for that period are no longer to be found, but on the basis of personal investigations I estimated that over that period about 200 pupils had attended the mission schools. With the abolition of school fees and the building of two new schools in the 1950s, large numbers of children of various religious denominations began to attend primary school. Most of the registers of the four primary schools in Iganna were still in existence, and I was able to calculate that a total of about 1,800 pupils had attended school at one time or another. When we add to this the previous estimated figure of 200 for the period before 1955, we arrive at a total of 2,000 Iganna people who have had some school education. When we compare this figure with that of the estimated 4,000 migrants arrived at earlier , the conclusion may be drawn that the number of migrants who did not attend school is about equal to the number of those who did attend. When we look at this ratio over time, however, we notice that the number of migrants who have attended school gains on the number of those who have not. This point, already suggested in table 2, is made more explicit in table 3, which shows the annual intake of pupils in the 1960s. When we enter into the 1970s, we find the intake rising to two hundred which, according to my statistics, does not leave out many Iganna children of school attendance age. This trend was confirmed by the teachers who go round the compounds annually



to register new children for the schools. Since the impact of school education has been to accelerate emigration and to keep educated migrants away in the cities (as I shall discuss elsewhere), we can only assume that the general rate of emigration is likely to increase in the years to come, especially as in 1975 the Government embarked on a programme of universal primary education. Conversely, the numbers of the residual native population will continue to decrease as a result of this "youth drain".

Year	1960	1965	1969
Number of pupils beginning primary school	85	155	188

Table 3 Rates of increasing school attendance

In the light of the statistics discussed so far I would estimate that during the period 1955-1975 there must have been on average more than 150 leaving Iganna each year. The number of children attending school in 1975 had soared, leaving only 60 children who were not registered. 180 were registered in Primary I, some fifty of whom having parents who were either non-natives of Iganna or natives "living away". If the present trend of emigration at the rate of 150 a year continues (and there is no reason to assume that it will be halted), these children can be expected to join the ranks of Iganna migrants within the next ten years or so, robbing the residual population of Iganna of a very large proportion of its most productive members.



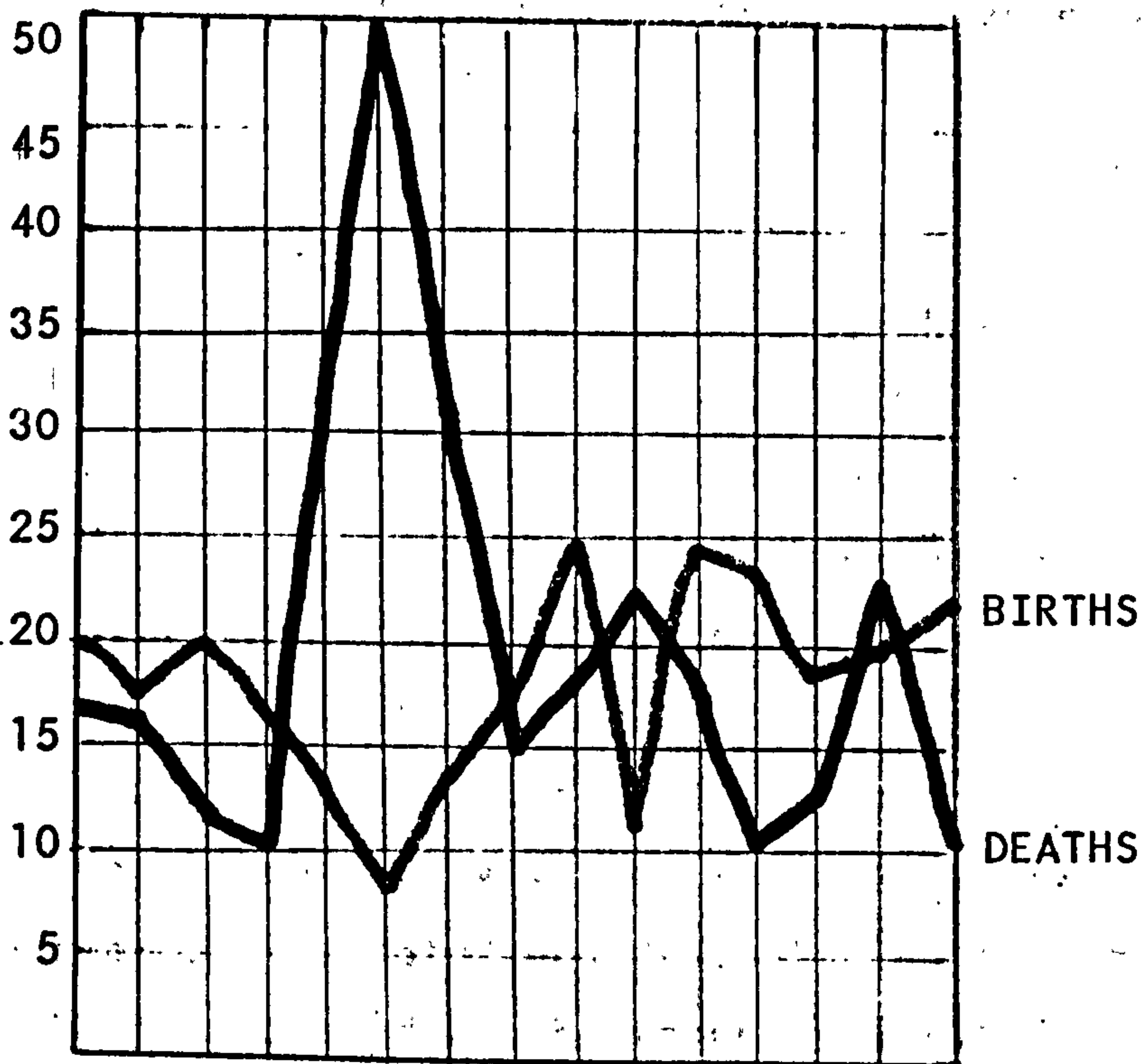
#### 4. Iganna: a decreasing population?

According to the Nigerian census results of 1963 and 1973 the average annual population increase in Iganna during those ten years was 200. Contrary to this I shall demonstrate that, in all probability, the residual population of Iganna natives is gradually decreasing every year.

In table 4(a) numbers of births and deaths which occurred in Iganna among the native residual population from August 1974 to October 1975 have been plotted on a graph, showing a total of 255 births (that is, an average of 17 a month) and a very high total of 303 deaths. Though informants who helped me in keeping a record of day-to-day events were often not specific about the ages of the people who died, I estimated that the figure included about 133 children under 15, the rest being adults (and especially elderly). Thus, in the fifteen months deaths outnumbered births by 48. It should be noted, however, that the exceptionally severe Harmattan period in the dry season of 1974-5 took an unusually heavy toll of children's and old people's lives. Not only in Iganna, but all over the country the death toll went up in this period. The annual Harmattan winds blew almost uninterruptedly for a full ten weeks (from 17 November to 25 January in Iganna), which is unusually long, causing great day-night variations in temperature, as well as common dryness and dust. Chest infections (tuberculosis, pneumonia etc.) were particularly rampant that season, especially among infants and the aged.

Death rates usually go up in the dry season, but what the average figure would be for Iganna over the last decades in which rural-urban migration has become so prominent is impossible to determine. No doubt the figure is usually much lower than the one I recorded in January 1975 (50 deaths); but for an accurate





Aug. S. O. N. D. Jan. F. M. A. M. J. J. A. S. Oct.  
1974. 1975

Table 4a Birth & mortality rates, 1974-5

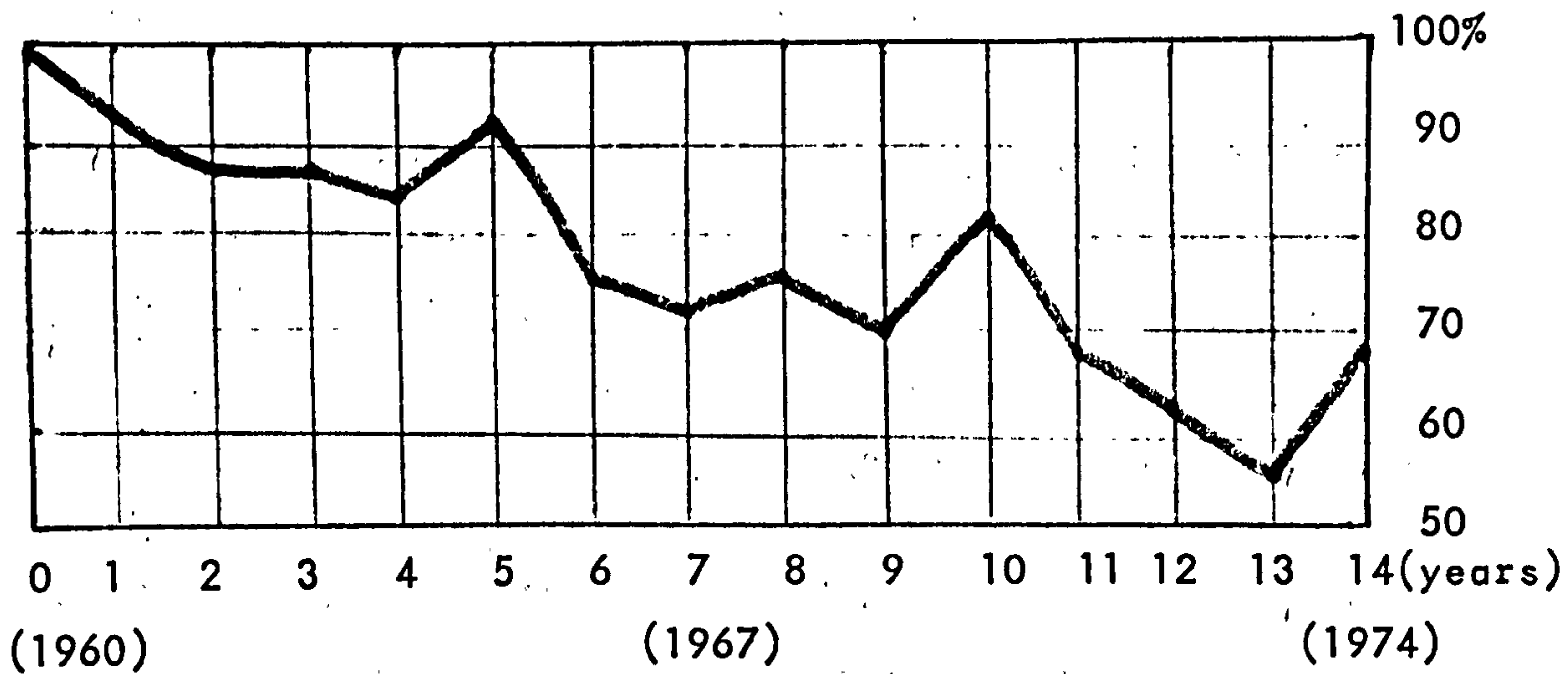


Table 4b Probability curve of children's survival rate to adulthood.



statistical study the possibility of epidemics must always be taken into account. The only reliable counter-check which I can make in the hope of mitigating the unfortunate high death toll of 1974-5 in Iganna is based on data from the neighbouring towns of Iwere-ile and Iwere-oke. Parish records meticulously kept by catechists of the local Catholic churches in both places provided reliable information on all the children born to church members for as far back as the 1950s. Records were also kept of the dates of children's deaths. In this way I obtained the figures of 662 births and 145 deaths for the period 1960-74, and plotted these on a graph in table 4b which shows the probable survival curve for children up to the age of fourteen. The data recorded in this table all predated the bad Harmattan period which accounted for the many deaths in table 4a; the sharp drop of the survival curve to only 57 percent in 1973 reflects instead the many deaths caused by the cholera epidemic which swept over Nigeria from 1970 to 1973. In the absence of modern medical services in the Iganna area, it would seem appropriate that an epidemic which caused accelerated mortality should appear in the analysis of survival chances when a period of up to fifteen years is being accounted for.

Assuming then that these statistics are representative for the Iganna area in general, it can be inferred that out of the estimated 204 annual births as many as 46 (that is, 22.5 percent) are likely to die before reaching the age of fifteen. Consequently, the number of young people that enter the category of potential migrants (which begins around the age of fourteen) is 158. From these it was estimated that about 150 will actually emigrate sooner or later, thus leaving only eight young people who are likely to stay on in Iganna in later life.

Looking now at the total resident population of Iganna, provisionally estimated at 15,000, an actual annual increase of about eight resident people that survive childhood is certainly very small. Moreover, when the number of annual adult deaths is subtracted from 15,008 there can be no doubt left that the population figure as a whole is decreasing annually. Even though the average number of adult deaths is unlikely to be as high as recorded in table 4a (136 annually), if it were only half as much Iganna would still be losing more than fifty members of its population a year as a result of death or emigration.

## 5. Conclusions

In the argument which I have pursued throughout this section my main objective has been to demonstrate that the residual native population in Iganna has been decreasing, mainly as a result of continued out-migration by the young people. Although the lack of actual population registers meant that information had to be supplemented by partial quantitative data, the case which was put forward is more than just impressionistic. Contrary to the Nigerian Census results which suggested an average annual population increase in Iganna of more than 200 people, I have argued that the native residual population loses at least fifty of its members annually, and that the influx of non-native farmers and pastoralists in the area, albeit substantial, in no way makes up for this loss. Hence the increases indicated in the Census seem to me totally unacceptable<sup>5</sup>.



## 6. Demographic corollaries

6.1 The time when migrants leave Iganna. Most Iganna migrants of the last twenty to thirty years seem to have left their hometown while still very young, usually between the ages of fifteen to twenty-five. This was amply established in my research, both from school records on old pupils and from interviews with Igannans at home and in the cities. There is, however, a substantial minority who emigrated at a maturer age, after working as farmers, traders or craftsmen in Iganna. Marriage or remarriage after divorce is also the occasion for many Iganna women to go and join their migrant husbands. Often migration may come about in stages; a boy or girl may go to a distant town in order to pursue secondary school education or to become apprenticed, and after this training either return home or move on to another town and start work independently. What is indisputably the most typical feature of present-day migration, however, is that it is predominantly the young people who leave Iganna; and as this movement accelerated sharply in the fifties and sixties, the bulk of the Iganna migrants were still under the age of 45 at the time of fieldwork.

6.2 Male/female ratios among the migrants. Although no statistical data exist of male/female ratios, the fact that migrants have continued to marry partners from their hometown makes the assertion that the numbers are evenly balanced plausible<sup>6</sup>. In the early days of migration men tended to outnumber women. This correlated with school attendances: school leavers were the first to give great impetus to rural-urban migration, and between 1955 and 1975 the sex ratio among primary school pupils in Iganna was 1.8 boys to 1 girl. Soon, however, more girls, even those who did not attend school, started leaving their homes to find work in the cities as domestic servants, shop assistants and so on, even before

they were married. Interestingly, many young migrant men say that they would prefer to marry a girl who has had the experience of city life rather than one who has never been out of Iganna.

6.3 Distribution of the migrants Another very significant feature of migration in Iganna is that since the turn of the century migrants have tended to go to the large urban centres, especially to Ibadan and Lagos. Although much of the migration in the rest of Yorubaland during the same period has been from one rural area to another, I have no record of Iganna migrants taking up farming in other towns.

Most Iganna migrants in Lagos live in the suburban township of Mushin; or more precisely in the quarter known as Oke-Isholo. From there some have started to move out to some of the outlying townships such as Ilasa and Agege, which are already in the process of being swallowed up by the expanding greater Lagos area. Closer to the centre of the city, on Lagos island and in the adjoining suburbs of Ebute-Meta and Suru-lere one also finds conglomerations of Iganna migrants. Many of the early migrants are settled in this area.

The second main urban area to which Igannans have been migrating is Ibadan, mostly living in the overcrowded quarter of Foko in the centre of the town.

A few Igannans established themselves as traders in Ghana in the twenties and thirties of this century, but they were much outnumbered by traders from other Yoruba towns such as Ilero, Ogbomoshole, Inisha, Oyan, and others. However, since their expulsion in 1969 most of them have returned to Nigeria.

In more recent years some Iganna migrants have moved to Sokoto,



Kaduna or some other town in northern Nigeria. Others still have moved to nearer places in Yorubaland such as Okeho, Iseyin, Shaki, Abeokuta, Oyo, Ife; but the numbers of migrants in these places are small, and residence is often temporary. Even Ibadan is often used by migrants as a stopover on their way to Lagos.

Given the large numbers of the migrants and the wide area over which they are scattered it is not possible to give accurate figures of their distribution. Using the 4,000 figure as a plausible working estimate, I will tentatively break this number down as shown in table 5.

Lagos (incl. Mushin, Ilasa, Agege, Ebute-Meta, Suru-Lere, Lagos island, Shomolu)	over 2,000
Ibadan	over 1,000
Abeokuta, Oyo, Ife, Iseyin, Shaki, Okeho, Ilero..... Sokoto, Kaduna.....	under 1,000

Table 5 Estimated numbers of Iganna migrants in urban areas

7. Conclusion

In this section my main concern has been to assess the demographic implications of present-day migration in Iganna. First and foremost I have argued that, contrary to official census results pointing to population increases, the residual native population is in fact steadily decreasing. In the course of

this argument three main points came to light. First , present-day migration has affected mostly young people, women as well as men. Since this type of emigration accelerated sharply in the 1950s, we expect the majority of the migrants to be under fifty years of age. Secondly, migrants seem to have moved almost exclusively to more urban environments, especially to Lagos and Ibadan. Occupationally this has meant that all these migrants have left agricultural production behind. Thirdly, concomitant with the emigration of young people, there has been a good deal of immigration into the Iganna area by people from other towns and ethnic backgrounds. The fact that most of these immigrants, who do not reside in the town but in outlying hamlets, are in fact agricultural producers, seems paradoxical in the face of the youth exodus which annually deprives Iganna of many potential farmers.

In the light of these conclusions it would seem that emigration has been coterminous with important changes in agricultural production in Iganna. In particular, the fact that so many non-native farmers have moved into the area will need further clarification; at the same time it will be necessary to know more about the young Iganna migrants in the cities and the nature of the alternative occupations they have engaged in there.

As all these phenomena are related to migration, and are as such part of changes which have come to the open in the recent decades, I shall now go on to analyse the various causes underlying present-day migration. First I shall examine the various reasons that the people themselves give for leaving the rural areas and moving to the cities. Then I shall try to assess the extent to which these reasons can provide an adequate explanation for the changes which are taking place.



## NOTES

1. Only the total figures for each of the 12 States and for the nation as a whole were released by General Gowon in a television broadcast on May 8 1974. According to these figures the then Western State (which included Iganna and most of Yorubaland) had a population of 8.92 million, while the population figure for the whole of Nigeria was put at 79.76 million. However, in the same broadcast General Gowon cautiously added that these figures were only provisional and subject to recheck.
2. In 1973 Orubuloye and Caldwell made a study of mortality levels in two small rural towns in north-eastern Yorubaland. In the study an attempt was made to measure the effects of providing health services in rural Nigeria by selecting two communities which were culturally and socio-economically as similar as possible, having the same kind of water supply and human wastes disposal method, but contrasting in the provision of health services. One centre had enjoyed the services of a doctor and a well-staffed hospital for over a decade, while the other was over ten kilometres away from even the nearest maternal health centre or shop which sold pharmaceutical products. It was concluded that the decline in mortality rates in the last half century could be almost wholly explained by the introduction of modern health services. Conversely, the lack of such decline seems to correlate directly with the absence of modern health facilities (Orubuloye and Caldwell, 1975:259-272). Though no similar study was made in Iganna, the absence of modern medical services in the town allows one to infer that the decline in mortality over the last century cannot have been very great.
3. A quantitative survey of five farming villages in different parts of Yorubaland showed that as a result of on-going rural-urban migration there had been an estimated 54.1 per cent decrease in the population of the various communities between 1952 and 1967. (See Olusanya 1969:37).
4. I prefer to use the term Olorisa rather than the term "pagan" to refer to the adherents of the cults of the ancestral Orisa (Yoruba deities).
5. Compared to the earlier quoted survey by Olusanya (see note 2), my own estimates of the annual population decline in Iganna are very low - probably too low.
6. This observation is borne out by the sex ratio - 108 males to 100 females among Yoruba residents in suburban Lagos, according to the 1963 Nigerian Census (NIGERIA 1963:11-66).

## CHAPTER II. RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION FROM THE PEOPLE'S POINT OF VIEW.

Everybody in Iganna is aware of the youth exodus to the cities. Elderly informants claimed a very recent date for this - the 1950s - and although I have evidence that emigration has been taking place since the beginning of the century, there is no doubt that in that decade there was a sharp acceleration.

In this chapter I shall first discuss local opinions on and attitudes towards migration, then move on to emic explanations of the phenomenon. For this I shall draw mainly on informal discussions which I had in the field. Where informants expressed their views on migration in Yoruba, I shall paraphrase these in English; where answers were given directly in English, I shall render them verbatim. I shall at times intersperse this discussion with responses to questions on migration written by students from various grammar schools throughout Yorubaland<sup>1</sup>. To the extent that the students' write-ins corroborated the views expressed by young people in Iganna I shall draw on all this material without making explicit references each time to either category of youngsters further on in the discussion.

Finally, I shall offer some statistical evidence based on the results of a questionnaire handed out to the students of the Okeho-Iganna grammar school (for a sample of the questionnaire, see Appendix I ). I am aware of the limited response framework of the questionnaire, which, after all, can receive answers only to questions it poses; I simply use it here as macro-corroboration of responses obtained in the micro-situation of fieldwork discussion. The results of the various investigations will then be carried on to the next chapter, where I shall



investigate the fit between these "attitudes" and "explanations" and the objective situation actually faced by the migrants.

Thus the results obtained in the questionnaire will form the starting point of the investigation, not the end product of it.

Although the extent to which ordinary people are aware of the far-reaching consequences of youth migration is difficult to ascertain, it is clear from my investigations that most people have a somewhat ambivalent but basically favourable attitude to emigration to the cities. Economic motives are usually imputed to the migrants: conditions of poverty in the farming community at home seem insurmountable, while life in the city teems with promises of progress and affluence. Although economic betterment was seen as the arch-motive, other reasons were also offered for the migration; clearly all these are relevant, and in the course of this analysis I shall attempt to bring out not only these overtly stated reasons, but also others thrown up in various contexts throughout my fieldwork.

## 1. Attitudes to migration

### 1.1 Non-migrants' views

1.11 Favourable When I asked parents in Iganna whether they would encourage their children to go to the city, almost invariably answers were in the affirmative. Generally the city is considered a more desirable place to live in than the rural backwater of Iganna, and parents do not blame the young people for leaving to follow the road of progress; on the contrary, such enterprising youngsters are admired for their courage and determination. One old compound head all of whose sons had gone to Lagos replied to my question by pointing to a pile of planks stacked on the veranda of his house with the words: "It is thanks to my sons that I got the money to buy these planks

to rebuild the roof of my house". Though not all elders can proudly show such tangible benefits of having children in the city, the hope that one day they may is always present.

Other very common attitudes towards migration were formulated in such terms as "going to the city is a good thing because there the young people will see the light"; or, "they will become civilised"; or again, "people in the city are brave and wise", as one farmer said.

Nevertheless, it was mainly in terms of financial gain that most people saw the benefits of migration. Expressions that kept cropping up all the time were: "In the city my sons will earn money"; and "They will send money home to help us and the town". More cynically, one teacher suggested to me another reason why parents should encourage their children to leave for the cities: the fact that this would free the parents from the responsibility of providing them with food, clothing, schooling, bride-price and so on.

Thus parents and elders in Iganna look upon migration favourably to the extent that it may improve both their own condition and that of their children. But the readiness with which parents may part with children whose needs become increasingly costly has its obverse side in the young people's growing independence and disinclination to help their parents. Consequently, to the extent that expectations which parents had of their children are not being fulfilled frustrations about migration are also likely to be expressed.

1.12 Unfavourable Sometimes older people do not mince their words in voicing their frustrations about their absentee children. One old man with whom I had been discussing present-day marriage procedures among young people complained bitterly,



saying that nowadays the migrants do their own matchmaking and transact marriages without even informing their parents, let alone giving the bride-price money to the girl's father. From there he went on to say: "Nowadays our children just stay in Lagos and do not want to help us on the farm any longer. Neither do they send us any money when we are in difficulties. When we were young we always used to help our parents".

Disappointment with migrant children was expressed on several occasions when I asked parents why they did not try to send their children to secondary school<sup>2</sup>. Children were said to become insubordinate after leaving home, openly flouting parental authority and refusing to help. Parents felt that money spent on their children's education would be wasted as far as they were concerned, since after leaving school their children would probably go to the cities and earn money without sending any of it back home to them. Nor do parents attempt to hide these feelings from their children; on one occasion, after the New Year celebrations of 1975, I met a group of teenaged boys and girls at the bus stop in Iganna. When I asked them why they were in such a hurry to rush back to Lagos, they replied:

When we returned home for the feast days with the little money which we had saved up in Lagos, our fathers were annoyed when we spent it here on parties. Therefore they refused us any help, and even told us that they had no money to feed us.

Obviously generation conflicts are not confined to Iganna parents, but what they do stress here is the parents' fear that money and care spent on children may never be reciprocated once these have emigrated.

Some Igannans couch their criticisms of migration in moralistic terms. One church leader bemoaned the fact that many young people no longer go to church once they have moved to the cities; worse still, many indulge in promiscuous behaviour and get into bad company. Generally there was a fear that city life may

alienate migrants from the folks back home.

Other reservations about migration concerned the difficulties migrants face; young farmers or craftsmen who had remained in Iganna often pointed to these. One tailor who a few years earlier had been planning to emigrate changed his mind when he learned that other migrant tailors had to supplement their income by taking jobs as labourers. Similar views were expressed by other craftsmen. The high cost of living in the city was another deterrent for potential migrants; in the words of the contemporaries of migrants, often ex-migrants themselves, "the rents paid on rooms in the city are too high", and "money which is spent on food for feeding the family is too much".

In recent years teachers and members of the Iganna Development Union have been putting pressure on parents to give their children secondary education and, where possible, professional training, "so that our boys and girls should not suffer in the cities as they have all too often been doing till now". Clearly these more educated and experienced people have realised how difficult it is to make a proper living in the cities without good academic or professional qualifications; and this is something that most Iganna boys and girls who simply rush off to Lagos and other places do not have.

## 1.2 Migrants' views

The migrants' own responses to my questions on migration often dwelled on social conditions in Iganna itself just as much as on city conditions. As this study focuses on the migration phenomenon mainly from the vantage point of Iganna itself, I was especially interested in comments that contrasted the advantages and disadvantages of the two social environments. No doubt these opinions were to a large degree determined by subjective experience: usually the more unsuccessful a migrant was,



the more bitter he was likely to feel towards his hometown, as the following account illustrates.

One Iganna man I interviewed had been a primary school teacher in Lagos for over twenty years. Twice he had started evening courses at the Yaba School of Technology in the hope of obtaining higher qualifications, but each time he had to abandon the course because of lack of funds (he had to support his family at the same time). Now that so many of his former colleagues were in higher positions and more affluent than he, he was still struggling to make ends meet. His frustrations were strongly reflected in the views he expressed about Iganna; for him the people there were very wicked and backward, too lazy to improve their own situation and interested only in receiving money from their relatives in the city.

Other men in similar predicaments held similar views. They stressed vehemently that even if they had enough money they would never build a house in Iganna. On the other hand, interviewees who had been successful in the cities (as, for instance, a motor repair shop owner and a Ministry of Trade employee) proudly stated that they had built a house in Iganna for their ageing parents and relatives. In fact a good many of the migrants who were doing well were most actively involved in the Iganna Development Union, the aim of which is to work towards unity and cooperation among the people of Iganna.

Yet, whether people have done well or badly, it was clear to me that most Iganna migrants I had been in contact with had no intention of ever returning to Iganna. There is even less likelihood of their children ever doing so. Certainly to date there is no indication that a considerable number of migrants will in fact return to Iganna<sup>3</sup>. The very poor ones - those who would even be better off in Iganna - prefer poverty abroad to ignominy at home; returning to Iganna empty-handed would be an admission that they are social failures.

On the whole, however, irrespective of whether migrants are

successful in the city, the major objection of most men to the idea of returning to Iganna had to do with the employment situation in Iganna itself. Usual responses were: "How can we return home when there is no work? There are no factories<sup>4</sup>, there is no business, no trade. The only thing we can do at home is to farm, but there is no money in farming".

Another deterrent to returning home is the fear of re-entering into a small, narrow-minded, oppressive world where angry ancestral gods (orisa) whose cults and shrines have been neglected are likely to send down diseases on the community. Most migrants feel that they would prefer to stay outside the orbit of the ancestral gods, which is also the orbit of petty jealousies and witchcraft. The successful migrant who decides to build a large modern house feels that he is courting danger by arousing the jealousy of invisible enemies. Though informants would not always state these fears overtly, throughout the course of my fieldwork I came across many instances of fear to display material wealth, or fear of being too innovatory. Many deaths are traced back to envied prosperity. One elderly migrant who had become very rich as a contractor in Lagos decided to build a large house in Iganna, and while the house was still under construction he suddenly died in 1974. Rumours immediately went round that he had fallen victim to the jealousy of witches.

## Conclusions

This analysis of the Igannans' views on migration suggests that the big urban centres hold for them the promise of a better life than the home town can offer. The failure of most migrants to find the kind of fulfilment they had hoped for has dampened much of the initial enthusiasm of the 1950s, when the youth exodus first started. Yet in spite of the disenchantment



most migrants show a very definite disinclination to return to Iganna, and least of all to return there with the intention of taking up farming.

## 2. Explanations of migration

Questioning people about the reasons for rural-urban migration was an ongoing pursuit throughout my fieldwork, and was not limited to Igannans; I extended the discussion also to many outsiders who were aware of this very widespread modern phenomenon. Most of the time I tried to elicit answers to questions rather randomly and informally in the course of conversations and interviews with informants. As time went on, a whole spectrum of reasons and motivations for migration began to unfold. From this spectrum it was not difficult to pick out some basic stereotypes of recurrent causes which it was thought made people decide to emigrate to the cities. In what follows I shall first review some of these recurrent causes in the light of actual statements and case material on hand. Secondly, on the basis of questionnaire results, I shall go on to quantify these causes and rank them in order of importance.

### 2.1 Reasons for leaving Iganna

2.11 The monotony of life in a rural place The Yoruba are a very gregarious people who like to combine work with an intense social life. This rural places like Iganna seem no longer able to offer; the pace is set in cities like Ibadan and Lagos, to which youngsters compare Iganna disparagingly: it has no piped water, no electricity, no cinemas, no bars, no discos.

Traditionally, most forms of leisure and entertainment were connected with the annual cycle of Orisa festivals. Young

people were always actively involved in these events, the men masquerading during the Egungun and Gelede festivals and the women organised in societies which took part in many of these celebrations. Nowadays the Orisa cults no longer mobilise young people the way they used to. The reasons for this decline will be more fully investigated in the last two chapters, but no doubt the impact of Christianity and Islam, school education and emigration, were important contributory factors. In any event, the result is that life has become much more monotonous in Iganna. Activities involving young people are now organised almost exclusively by primary schools; these include sports events and plays, which draw large numbers of townspeople. Christian churches organise activities such as youth days and evangelist campaigns, and the Muslim youth has its special day when entertainments are organised in the market place. But it is only at Christmas and the New Year, when large numbers of young migrants return home, that Iganna is suddenly rejuvenated and becomes a lively town. Dances and parties are held, and everywhere one sees young people having meetings or visiting friends; young migrants display in dress and behaviour styles and fashions which they have brought with them from the city for the occasion. On their departure after the feast days the tone of life in the town reverts to its usual monotonous rhythm.

Not surprisingly, it is especially people with some experience of city life who dislike the way of life in Iganna. Moreover, it is those who attended secondary school, and even more so the few who went on to higher education, who have become most alienated from the rural population. On several occasions during my field work I acted as host to grammar school and University students who were on holiday. In some cases the students had actually been sent out to (re-)familiarise themselves with the people in the villages; but to all of them life in Iganna



was so boring and frustrating that they usually welcomed their return to their more urban environments with a sigh of relief.

The foregoing is naturally not meant to imply that Igannans do not enjoy leisure, or that they are totally without modern amenities. The cycle of Orisa festivals still takes place every year, and there is usually some celebration or other in all quarters of the town: funerals, naming ceremonies for new-born children, the return from Mecca of some Muslim pilgrims. As far as modernisation is concerned, a whole range of modern amenities has come to Iganna in recent years: a tarred road, more frequent motor transport services to the cities, manufactured commodities in the markets, beer parlours, and so on. The fact still remains, however, that for the young people all this is no match for what the cities can offer them.

2.12 Individual victimisation as cause for migration I have already referred to the dangers thought to surround sumptuous displays of affluence in Iganna. Fears of victimisation by envious neighbours, witches, sorcerers and malevolent sprites (not to mention punishment inflicted by angered ancestral Orisa) are realities which will have to be discussed in various contexts throughout this study; but the extent to which such fears are instrumental in actually driving people out of Iganna is more difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, I shall make an attempt to pin this down.

First, some historic facts. Many of the people who settled in Iganna during the nineteenth century were refugees from towns destroyed in the Dahomean and Fulani wars; but reasons other than warfare were also given by compound narrators to explain why their ancestors had left their towns of origin in the first place. These reasons often indicated that the first settlers

had emigrated after their descent group had been scourged by disease and depleted by death, and in many of the histories I collected Abiku were held responsible for these misfortunes. (Abiku l'o da won l'aamu). Abiku are believed to be malevolent sprites who allow children to be born to certain women, only to lure them away from their mothers when they grow up. I append two cases of their supposed misdeeds.

The blacksmiths of Atake's compound in Iganna left their town of origin, Irawo, at a time when many of the children born in the lineage were dying. Although Abiku sprites received the blame for the multiple deaths, the Atake ancestors felt that they were becoming the objects of too much envy within their town. It should be mentioned here that Irawo blacksmiths are organised in a highly specialised guild that has the monopoly for the manufacture of the iron staffs used in the cults of the deity Orisa-oko in all the towns of the former Oyo empire. What transpires from the Atake history is that their ancestors became too outstanding either because of their skills or because of the patronage they received, and thus exposed themselves to the jealousies of their colleagues.

In the same manner, the chiefly lineage of Ikolaba in Iganna had emigrated from the town of Shaki after most of the children born there had died. Though the cause of the multiple deaths was again ascribed to the Abiku sprites it seems that the Ikolaba ancestors had good reasons for fearing victimisation in Shaki. Originally they had come from Old Oyo, but as soon as they had settled in Shaki they were given the Agamu chieftaincy title. Knowing the reputation of the Shaki people for their expertise in the use of black magic and their power to harm (a reputation which they have to the present day, even among many educated Oyo men<sup>5</sup>), the Ikolaba ancestors may have felt that their quick promotion would be resented by other chiefs or townspeople, and thus expose them to victimisation. Hence their decision to emigrate further to Iganna, a town reputed for its strong loyalties to the kings of Oyo (Alaafin) and its readiness to welcome and honour Oyo migrants.

Other instances of victimisation mentioned as reasons for changing residence in the old days were cases of repeated arson. Though arson did not necessarily drive people from their towns,



the compounds of Ago-Are and Bashamu did move to different sites in Iganna after being burned down on several occasions. Arson was a common way of secretly harming one's enemies in the old days. In pre-colonial Oyo the use of arson seemed to have developed almost into an institution; as one missionary wrote in 1884: "Fire is a very special instrument of vengeance at Oyo; the place is notorious for it. For the least grievance houses go up in flames. If a man cannot get near enough he uses a flaming arrow...." (quoted in Hales 1968).

These historical precedents, coupled with my own knowledge of present-day prevalence of victimisation fears, had predisposed me to expect to hear such fears given as reasons for migration. In the event, however, the only migrants who did say that they had left Iganna because of the way in which they were persecuted there were ones who had run into political difficulties during the 1955-66 period<sup>6</sup>. Yet although fear of victimisation was not offered independently by many informants as a reason for leaving the hometown, when the question was put to them directly (as in questionnaires), fear of witches and secret enemies ranked very highly as factors driving people from their hometowns. I am inclined therefore to consider this an important contributory factor for emigration. The reason why migrants themselves did not readily admit to having acted on such fears has to do, in my opinion, with the way language and communication are used to cloak "secrets". When the diviner, in private consultation with his client, reveals to him the name of the witch who is harming him, this information remains a secret only in the sense that those who know about it must pretend ignorance; the witch, after all, is capable of striking again. Any action undertaken on the basis of this "secret" information must then be accounted for by other reasons; and as most actions are usually motivated by a multiplicity of reasons, explicit reasons

may be just as "real" as the hidden ones. Neither are these hidden reasons inaccessible to the enquirer, since through gossip, covert allusions and so on, many outsiders can easily surmise the nature of the "secret".

It is only when this secret danger is remote both in time and space that people become less inhibited about mentioning it openly; as we saw, present-day descendants of the original migrants have no qualms about discussing the kind of victimisations their forefathers suffered in their hometown in the nineteenth century.

Many of the more educated, the young and the travelled, are nowadays reluctant to admit that the misfortunes suffered by some people are in fact caused by angered Orisa or bush sprites. Although belief in the powers of witches is still prevalent, often when someone falls seriously ill or dies suddenly and no exact diagnosis is obtained from diviners people are apt to suspect that the victim had been poisoned, probably by an enemy.

An example of such scepticism is an incident which I recorded during the Oro festival in Iseyin in 1972. Traditionally, when the spirit Oro visits the town at this time, announcing his presence by the sound of the bull-roarer, women are supposed to remain indoors. Around 1970 the various Christian churches in Iseyin started a vigorous campaign to abolish this taboo and allow women to come out without fear of victimisation. On the official front the Christians apparently won the war when the Western State Government backed up their petition and promised freedom of movement to all women in Iseyin during the Oro festival. Yet in 1972 I met some nurses who still observed the taboo; they explained to me that they no longer fear Oro (that is the spirit - Orisa), but the Oloro (that is, the priest of the Oro cult). They feared that if they went out they might be reported to the Oro priests who in retaliation might inflict secret punishment on them. In 1974-5, when I enquired again about the latest developments in the Christians versus Oro fight, I picked up some rumours about some women who had come out during the Oro festival and subsequently died. My informant went on to whisper that it was the Oloro who used poison to



punish the transgressors of their deity's taboo.

In conclusion, then, although individual migrants are not likely to say that they left Iganna because they were being attacked by witches or sorcerers, there is little doubt that beliefs in the powers of such agents to inflict punishment are still very prevalent, and fears of attacks (whether founded or not) have precipitated the decision of many people to emigrate. This was acknowledged in general terms by many informants (see questionnaire results).

2.13 Dislike of farming Farming in Iganna is probably the most serious casualty of youth migration. Had these youngsters stayed at home, they would have had to take up employment at least indirectly related to agriculture; but they make no secret of their contempt for farming, which they consider menial and unrewarding<sup>7</sup>.

Farming in the hometown was disliked because "our fathers are still using primitive tools like the hoe and the cutlass", or because "we are too poor to buy tractors or use fertilisers and other methods which they use at the "Agric"" (agricultural settlements run by the Government). Moreover, farming was "too tough" and "too tedious", and "life in the farm is lacking in amenities". Further, primitive conditions meant for most youngsters that farmers were "not enlightened", had "no education", and were generally inferior to city dwellers. There was general agreement that farming was not profitable economically. A graduate informant, tutor at the Okeho-Iganna grammar school, summed it all up in one sentence: "The old system of farming with rather primitive tools under a corporate family system means that many young people try to get out of it and hope to be better off and freer by going to the cities".

Although changes in agricultural production will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, for our present purposes this negative attitude towards farming can be summed up briefly in four main points. First, because of the farmers' poverty, tools were still primitive, and general conditions bad; secondly, the work was hard and tedious; thirdly, the traditional corporate household system operated, which meant that sons and daughters had to submit to the authority of their fathers; fourthly (and this was the most commonly reiterated reason), it was thought that there was no money in farming.

## 2.2 Reasons for going to the urban centres

Rural-urban migration is seen by most people as a positive move. Usually those who decide to go to the cities have very strong incentives for doing so, and find it easier to express these than the more complex reasons which drove them out of Iganna. Thus, many of the criticisms of life in Iganna were often formulated by contrast to the advantages and expectations of life in the city, and were alluded to obliquely rather than clearly stated (or, I suspect, clearly perceived) by most informants. Basically, reasons which informants reiterated for moving to the urban centres revolved around four major themes, which I shall now go on to discuss.

2.21 Life in the cities is more exciting and comfortable For many years now migrants have returned home on the occasion of some festival with the express intention of impressing people at home with their newly-acquired city manners, language and finery. This is known in Yoruba as se faari (showing off, ostentatious entertainment and feasting). No illusion is entertained that such visiting migrants may want to contribute to work at home or on the farm. Usually people who can afford to indulge in se faari are also likely to be known as gbajumo; a



gbajumo is a person of means, who dresses well, moves around in the company of fine people, appears at all social occasions, is popular and can spend money on the entertainment of friends. Becoming a gbajumo is a popular Yoruba dream, and the ambition of many migrants is to give the folks at home the impression that by going to the cities they are somehow making this dream come true. Often, however, this has the effect of making people live above their means; although being known as gbajumo is honourable, and the exact opposite of ara oko (bush man, ruffian), to many people it also means being chronically in debt in order to maintain the appearance of affluence. As one informant said, "The real trouble here in Lagos is that everyone wants to be gbajumo". But a rich man in appearance is not always a rich man in fact, and the term gbajumo can be further contrasted with the term olowo, which denotes a person who has money, and who by implication is also a potential or actual moneylender<sup>8</sup>. I shall return to the topic of debts and moneylending later in this study. What I want to stress here is that these returning migrants, whether their appearance of affluence is illusory or not, manage to capture the imagination of the young people who will subsequently follow them to the cities in search of the marvellous things that the migrants let them have a glimpse of.

General amenities, and the pace and possibilities of social life were the most attractive aspects of the city. Many informants point out that "In the city there is piped water supplied and electricity", "you never have to wait long for taxis and buses", and "there are hospitals and doctors nearby". As far as social life is concerned, according to one migrant, "in the city you have more friends, you can attend parties where you know how to move around with people". A similar view was expressed by a young girl: "In the city you learn to be sociable and you become up to date in fashion." A more senior migrant, however, took an austerer view of the situation: "Our young boys and girls come

to the city to get involved in what they see their mates do, like drinking, attending parties, going to bars and some even to ill-reputed "hotels", in short, to enjoy wrongly".

Examples could be multiplied, but what does stand out quite clearly is that for most Igannans city life is more glamorous and exciting than life in the hometown. Hence also the enormous pull it has on so many unattached people in Iganna, especially the young.

2.22 "City air makes man free"<sup>9</sup> I discussed earlier the nature of the constraints migrants want to avoid by moving to the cities; here I will be concerned with what, for migrants, are the liberating effects of the cities. From their own comments, two main points emerged. First, belonging to a very large, multi-ethnic cosmopolitan community relaxes pressures of conformity to established social norms as they exist in Iganna. One student explained that what attracted him most about city life was the opportunity "to see life and explore independently". Similarly, many other informants stated that what drives most young people to the cities is "their desire for adventure", their desire to explore freer, less constrained ways of life. Becoming more liberal in outlook and behaviour was considered a true assertion of individuality, which is made possible by the large cosmopolitan environment.

Secondly, city freedom was valued because it enabled migrants to become more peripheral to the various home-based societies. Many of the associations and clubs in Iganna have branches in Lagos and Ibadan, but there is usually also a proliferation of societies formed in the cities by Iganna migrants. All this is very typical of the Yoruba way of life, but the difference in the urban environments is that here membership of the various



societies is often purely nominal. Being a member of a society can have many advantages, both moral and material; but it also means that membership fees and other occasional levies have to be paid, and these are commitments that people can dodge more successfully in the cities. Church or mosque membership is a case in point. In the city this is usually organised on the basis of home affiliations; thus in Lagos and Ibadan various local societies are found that group together Iganna Muslims, Baptists and Catholics. The weekly meetings of these societies, however, were attended by only a handful of members. When I asked the active members about their absentee co-religionists I was told that most of them keep a low profile when they come to the city, either because "they are too poor", or because "they prefer to spend their money on their enjoyment". This also happens to a certain extent in Iganna, though the pressures churches or other voluntary organisations can exert on their members there in order to make them pay their dues are much stronger.

Once in the city, migrants soon realise that they must learn to fend for themselves if they want to get anywhere. Useful contacts and ability to manipulate networks are therefore essential. These networks extend beyond the limited circle of the Iganna migrant community, so that very often migrants feel that, although membership of various societies can be useful, home-based societies are not particularly effective in the city. Hence many show little commitment to these. This tendency is also related to one of the major reasons for migration: the wish to gain some freedom from pressures from the extended family, which is the primary group of social organisation in Iganna.

Above all migrants prefer life in the city because of the freedom

it gives them to choose their own marriage partners. Some migrants went as far as to say that they went to the city to look for a wife. As it happens, Iganna migrants usually end up marrying partners from their own town, or occasionally from other towns within the same area; but matchmaking is often conducted without the parents' advance knowledge or permission. Many couples prefer to be away from Iganna and their relatives in the compound; married women especially seemed to value the remoteness from their husbands' mothers. As one woman said, "Many young people come to Lagos to avoid misunderstandings between the wife and the husband's mother or any other relative". Another woman's opinion of family relations in Iganna was that "some parents are irresponsible: they will spy on their daughter-in-law and inform the husband of whatever she might be doing". The implication here was that such things do not happen in the city, where people are freer to pursue their individual paths.

## 2.23 By going to the cities one becomes more "civilised"

The term "civilisation" currently epitomises best of all what the cities stand for: western technology, bureaucracy, party politics, commerce, academia, a new culture and a new social order. Although two common Yoruba terms exist to denote this cluster - ilosiwaju ("going ahead", "progress") and ilaju ("opening one's eyes", seeing the light) - the term "civilisation" (or "being civilised") is now currently used in Yoruba speech, even by many illiterate people<sup>10</sup>. It is in this sense that I shall use the term "civilisation" throughout. The derogatory term ara oko (ruffian, uncouth person) which traditionally marked the contrast between the farm (oko) and the hometown has now been extended to mark the contrast between both of these on the one hand and large urban centres on the other. Consequently, people who know only their rural hometown are



hardly considered truly civilised; as one man commented, "if we stay at home we won't know the world outside and therefore much about civilised people". For, as another man said, "the city is more civilised than the village".

No doubt some rays of civilisation have penetrated into remote rural towns and villages. But young people feel that civilisation should be investigated at its very source, and it is the ambition to do this that, in the words of many informants, has been attracting large numbers of people to the cities. Recurrent comments by informants explaining rural-urban migration were: "We go to the cities in order to become civilised", or "to look for progress", or again, "to gain wider knowledge of the things going on in the world"; and so on in the same vein.

Uncritical acceptance of white people as the only true custodians of civilisation was a legacy of the colonial era, not only in Iganna but all over Africa. In the last few decades, however, and especially since Nigeria's political independence from Britain in 1960, people have become increasingly more confident in their potentials as a nation to bring about their own "civilisation". Whereas formerly the ambition of many people was "to go and learn about the white man's secrets", which could only be pursued by the few who could afford to study in Europe or America, nowadays, with the proliferation of grammar schools and other institutions of higher education (including many universities) people have come to realise that civilisation can be home-grown. The key is education, especially tertiary and professional. In turn, education goes together with city life: according to one secondary school student, "by going to the city we feel academic and psychedelic". With this then trendy word the student conveyed that only in the city could an academic man about town feel at ease. Many other

informants who had come to the city in search of higher education felt the same way.

For those migrants who did not have the opportunity to acquire much education, living in the city in itself offered some alternative access to civilisation. In fact all the people I talked to in Iganna seemed to think that by living in places like Ibadan or Lagos one became civilised as if by osmosis.

## 2.24 In the cities there are better opportunities to earn money

That most of the wealth of Nigeria is concentrated in the large urban centres is not questioned by Igannans; they know that money is made and spent in the cities and no longer in farming areas. "In the old days", Iganna elders say, "the wealthy people (olowo) were the big farmers, but now there are none of them left". Migration is seen as an escape from this rural poverty; many migrants say that they have come to the city "because our people at home are poor". One senior town chief in Iganna who always showed great interest in my research work used to say "Let the Government know that our people here are suffering".

The discrepancy between the objective fact of the relative wealth to be found in the city on the one hand and the obvious poverty of most migrants on the other will be the major theme of the following chapter. In this section I simply want to show why Igannans believe that work in the three major areas of employment other than farming (salaried work, craft specialisation and trade) can be more profitably pursued in the cities.

For the many illiterate farmworkers, salaried employment is a sinecure; the actual amount in the pay packet (often very small) is not a matter enquired into. Consequently salary earners in



Iganna are constantly snowed under with demands from relatives. This is sufficient motive for people who have the opportunity to move to the cities, out of the clutches of persistent supplicants.

Craft specialisation is seen by many as an alternative to farming which can be practised within the hometown. In reality, however, craftsmen in Iganna can only make ends meet by engaging in part-time farming. The cities, by offering larger clienteles, increase the chances of craftsmen to live by their crafts alone. Prospective craftsmen may sometimes emigrate to the city in order to apprentice themselves. One apprentice cobbler in Ibadan described his situation in the following way: "As my parents were very poor and there was no other work besides farming in Iganna, I decided to come and learn this craft". A glasscutter faced a similar situation after graduating from a secondary modern school: "Some of my classmates were selected as probational teachers by the Mission. Those of us who remained behind, however, had no other choice but to come to Ibadan and learn a craft, because our parents were very poor".

As in the case of craft specialisation, trade is an occupation pursued by Igannans (especially the women) since time immemorial. In recent times, with the expansion in both the range of consumer goods and the distances over which these circulate, an ever-increasing number of people have been drawn into trade activities. For the women, cities provide better opportunities for trading, in a number of ways. To begin with, they facilitate supply and increase demand; most manufactured and imported goods are easier to obtain and quicker to sell in the cities. Secondly, women are more likely to find affluent husbands in the cities who can provide them with greater trading capital than their farmer husbands (whom they subsequently frequently divorce).

### 3. How people assess the various reasons for migration

In the preceding discussion the various reasons which people expressed to account for rural-urban migration were summarised and listed under seven main headings. I shall now go on to examine how people rated these reasons, and in what order of priority they placed them.

As most of the information on reasons for migration was collected piecemeal, my attempts to assess their order of importance for the people remained for a long time rather impressionistic. It was this problem which eventually prompted me (after about eight months of fieldwork) to issue a questionnaire to the students of the Okeho-Iganna Grammar School<sup>11</sup>. This furnished me with quantifiable data for the purpose of further analysis and comparison.

The questionnaire, which was designed to obtain statistical information on various topics, included two explicit questions on migration. These questions reiterated the seven main reasons discussed earlier, and the respondents were asked to state which they thought was the most important one (a) in accounting for emigration from the rural towns and villages, and (b) in accounting for the great rush to the cities. Although I had left a space for the respondents to add other possible reasons, all "other reasons" offered were simply a rephrasing of the original seven.

#### 3.1 Why do people leave the rural areas? (Statistical approach)

The first question took as vantage point the rural towns whose populations have been depleted by the large scale out-migration. The question was formulated as follows: Why do many people move out of the smaller towns nowadays? The following three answers



were suggested.

- a. Farming requires too hard work for too little money.
- b. Life in the small towns and in the farms is too monotonous and dull.
- c. A person who is successful and makes progress in his hometown is afraid of witches and people who will be jealous of his success and therefore use bad medicine against him.<sup>12</sup>

Room was left for other possible alternatives, although as mentioned earlier no true alternatives appeared. The results are shown in percentages in table 6.

	Total	Boys	Girls
a	31.6%	37.4%	19.6%
b	28.8%	30.6%	25.2%
c	39.6%	32%	55.1%

Table 6 Evaluation of stated reasons for emigration from rural areas

The total results for boys and girls shown in the first column are relatively close to each other, though the order of priorities ( $\underline{c} > \underline{a} > \underline{b}$ ) clearly suggests that out-migration is primarily looked upon as a way of moving out of an oppressive and unrewarding environment (reasons c and a respectively). It was mainly the pupils in the highest form who went for reason b (monotony and unattractiveness of rural places), and especially the girls. One explanation for this could be that these older pupils, who usually spent their holidays in the cities, were becoming increasingly acclimatised and attracted to the life there.

Although the total results on table 6 do not show any dramatic variations between the three reasons, further breakdown of the figures reveals interesting variations between boys and girls on reasons a and c. From the boys' answers it is clear that their dislike of rural life lies mainly with farming (reason a scored highest); whereas girls express their objections to rural life mainly in terms of fears of enemies and witches (c scored highest with them); in forms III and IV as many as 62.5 and 66.7 percent respectively selected this reason. Why this age-group in particular (16-17 year olds) should go more for this reason is not clear; but in general the girls' hypersensitivity to the question of secret victimisation in rural communities may to a large extent be explained by the fact that in Yoruba society witchcraft accusations are invariably aimed at women. As potential mothers also, young girls may be more sensitive to the possibility of seeing their children die in infancy as a result of the evil machinations of witches and abiku sprites.

That a low percentage of girls selected reason a can be explained by the fact that Yoruba women do not work much on the farm. Men are the farmers, and this may explain why the highest percentage of them selected a; but their concern with c was lowest, as witchcraft accusations are not directed at men.

Boredom and the monotony of rural life (reason b) are popularly assumed to be the main reasons why young people leave the rural towns, but as the results of this questionnaire show, reasons to do with the problems of farming (a) and the oppressiveness of rural life (c) were generally considered to outweigh the rather vague question of rural boredom (b). How specific these motivations are will be further clarified in the following paragraphs, where reasons for moving to the cities are compared



quantitatively.

### 3.2 Why people move to the cities (statistical approach)

In order to complement the question on out-migration from the rural towns the questionnaire also asked the following: "Why do many people prefer to live in the big cities?" Four alternatives were suggested<sup>13</sup>:

- d. Because they are looking for jobs.
- e. Because in the city they feel free from the control of parents, the gossip of neighbours, etc.
- f. Because they enjoy the liveliness of the city, the big shops and markets, the parties and places of entertainment, etc.
- g. Because they want to become more "civilised".

Although the respondents sometimes added more reasons of their own, as in the previous case these only reiterated, in more specific terms, one of the questionnaire reasons. For example, one respondent added: "People go to the city because there is trade." For the purposes of analysis, I took the liberty of including such answers under d. The tabulated results of the answers to this question are shown in percentages in table 7.

	Total	Boys	Girls
d	65.3%	67.5%	60.9%
e	5.8%	6.1%	5.2%
f	9.6%	10.5%	7.8%
g	19.2%	15.8%	26.1%

Table 7 Evaluation of stated reasons for urban-bound migration

My earlier remark that for most people rural-urban migration

was perceived as a positive move is further supported by the questionnaire results as shown on table 7. The figures here indicate some important differences of opinion among the respondents, which suggests that on the whole many young people have very definite ideas why they want to go to the cities; whereas responses to the reasons for out-migration were far more equally balanced statistically (see table 6). Moreover, the results on table 7 show a remarkable concurrence of opinion between boys and girls.

Table 7 also shows that migration to the cities was envisaged in a very positive way, rather than as a stop-gap solution to the problems of rural towns. Had young people really been looking to the cities simply as an escape from whatever they disliked about rural town life, one would have expected obvious correlations between the figures on tables 6 and 7. For example, reason e, which refers to the kind of freedom rural migrants may find in the cities, might be envisaged as a solution to the family pressures and fears of victimisation which are typical of small town life (as in c). However, in their answers to the question why so many people move to the cities the respondents simply tried to choose the best reason out of d, e, f and g, without considering its fit to the reason they had previously ticked on the question of why people leave the rural areas in the first place. This may explain why reason e (freedom of city life) could come last on table 7, inspite of the fact that reason c (oppressiveness of rural towns) came first on table 6. Logically, if the students had acknowledged that reason e complements reason c, these two scores on tables 7 and 6 should have matched; that they did not indicates that what mattered for the respondents about city life, more than the freedom it offers, was reasons f, g and d.



Similarly, f, which stressed the excitement and liveliness of the city in contradistinction to the monotony and drudgery expressed by b, did not score anywhere near as high as b in table 6. This of course does not mean that the respondents were not attracted to the pleasures and stimulations of city life; but it does mean that other reasons have precedence over this. Far more important was the wish to become civilised<sup>14</sup> (g in table 7). Although this highly cultural motivation had no explicit correlate in table 6, the percentage of 19.2 for g on table 7 shows that for the respondents the cities harbour very positive values. Thus the total for g was well above the totals for e and f taken together.

Clearly, however, d won a head over shoulders victory, scoring almost twice as high as all the other reasons put together. The order of priorities on table 7 can be summarised as follows: d (65.3%) >>> g (19.2%) >> f (9.6%) > e (5.8%). Thus one may say that most people look upon migration as a positive move which is primarily aimed at improving their economic situation.

### 3.3 Corollary: Why is emigration predominantly city-oriented?

As we have seen in the foregoing section, the commonest answer to the above question is that the urban centres offer widest scope for work opportunities. It was found, however, that other Yoruba migrants to non-urban areas also rationalised their decision to migrate primarily by the "quest for money" argument. These findings suggested that there was no necessary correlation in the people's minds between living in the city and making money; it therefore became possible to separate these two issues and pose them as two distinct questions in order to determine whether "becoming urbanites" or earning money (even if this meant going to non-urban areas) was foremost in the minds of

young people. To this end, the following question was posed in the questionnaire: "By the year 2000 where do you hope to be living?" The three alternative options to this were:

- h. I hope to be living in my hometown.
- i. I hope to be living in a big city.
- j. I do not mind where I shall be living, provided I can earn sufficient money.

The results of this question are shown in percentages in table 8.

	Total	Boys	Girls
h	25.2%	23%	29.1%
i	12%	11.3%	13.4%
j	62.8%	65.7%	57.5%

Table 8 Evaluation of stated preferences for ultimate residence

Even though the possibilities are that most respondents will in fact become residents of Nigeria's large urban centres sooner or later, the deliberate choice of becoming urbanites was opted for by a minority of 12 percent. The ratio of boys to girls was almost equal, and the slight majority of girls over boys was consistent with the results of reason g in table 7, where the ambition to become civilised was much more strongly expressed by the girls than the boys (26.1% > 15.8%).

A rather large number of girls and a slightly smaller number of boys said that they preferred to live in their hometown, for reasons not made explicit in the questionnaire. It is



worth mentioning, however, that in my fieldwork I found that Yoruba migrants always retain links with their hometown, even if these links are mainly sentimental and of little effective importance (which is usually the case). By far the largest number of respondents stated that they were prepared to go anywhere provided they could make a proper living. Random observations and comments by informants about the girls' lower score on this (57.5 percent to the boys' 65.7) revealed, firstly, that women show less readiness to move just anywhere. It was often said that what women, and especially the educated ones, expect from their husbands, is the stability necessary for the education of their children and which would enable them also to pursue their own trade or occupation. Hence their stronger inclination to reside either at home or in the urban centres. Secondly, irrespective of the economic activities of their wives, it is men who are primarily responsible for maintaining the family: for this reason they are likely to move anywhere provided they can earn sufficient money.

This greater concern with earning money which the boys showed is consistent with their scores on the two earlier questions. The financial considerations in table 6 which suggested that farming in the hometown is not profitable (reason a) received a much higher score from the boys than from the girls (37.4% > 19.6%); similarly, reason d in table 7 which suggested that people go to the cities to look for work also received more from the boys (67.5% > 60.9%).

Nevertheless, for the great majority of both boys and girls it is clear from the questionnaire results that the "quest for money" is the main drive behind migration (reason d on table 7), and in order to succeed in this quest they are prepared to go anywhere (choice j on table 8). If these questionnaire results

are to be taken at face value, it would seem that the great rush to the cities can be explained almost entirely in terms of better opportunities for earning money; all other reasons appear incidental, as was shown by the low score of 12 percent on choice i (table 8). Yet this apparent lack of interest in urban life (apart from what it may offer in terms of better work opportunities) was somehow not in keeping with the results of yet another question answered by the same respondents. Asked where they usually spent their holidays, only about thirty percent replied that they stayed in their hometowns. Another thirty had vague answers about staying with friends or relatives in distant towns (including occasional spells in the cities). The rest (almost forty percent) always went to Lagos, Ibadan, or some other large town<sup>15</sup>. As these students are not yet in a position to earn money, the interest that they show in urban life cannot be traced back to a "quest for money" desire. Discrepancies between the statements people make and the way they behave are problems well known to the social anthropologist. In this case respondents professed a purely pragmatic interest in the city (most students considering the cities no different from any other place where they might be able to make a living); yet it was found from their holiday peregrinations that their non-pecuniary interests in the cities were already very strong. It is observations like these which indicated that the analysis must be pushed beyond the level of what the people themselves perceive, think and say about their own socio-cultural condition. Often true understanding of a particular social phenomenon can be reached only by comparing and contrasting what people say on the one hand and what they do on the other. This is the exercise which I shall pursue in the following section.



#### 4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed rural-urban migration as it presents itself from the people's point of view. From the various points which were discussed it would seem that to most people, and especially to the young, the big cities hold the promise of a new order which will free them from the poverty and backwardness of rural towns. Rather than emigrate to other rural areas, young people move predominantly to the large urban centres; here they hope to earn more money than by farming, by practising some craft or by trading in the hometown.

Although the migrants' parents and Igannans in general have mixed feelings about migration, they are basically in favour of their children's decision to move to the cities. In this respect they share the hopes of the migrants of rich job opportunities to be found in the cities. At the same time Iganna parents also hope that after they have achieved greater affluence their migrant children will help them in their old age and promote the prosperity of their hometown.

In the following two chapters I shall try to demonstrate, drawing from observations in Iganna, that however significant and often-quoted the "quest for money" explanation, it is both inadequate and misleading to suggest that it offers a complete explanation for the migration phenomenon. It is misleading, because it ignores the fact that commercial farming (that is, present-day cashcropping) can be lucrative; it is inadequate, because it fails to account for the fact that most Iganna migrants, far from achieving affluence, live in relative poverty.

Moreover, the non-pecuniary explanations summarised under reasons e, f and g on table 7, however low their score, still

have to be accounted for. Even within the narrow context of the questionnaire results there are strong indications that these reasons deserve consideration. First, the counterparts of reasons e and f in table 7 were, from the Igannan point of view, summarised under reasons b and c in table 6; the fact that the scores on b and c were relatively high indicates strongly that the themes of freedom/constraint and emancipation/drudgery are more important than their low scores on table 7 suggest.

Secondly, reason g (desire to become civilised) on table 7 was given the not negligible score of almost twenty percent. However, as the respondents had also been asked to mark their second choices<sup>16</sup> this brought the score on g to over forty percent, putting it in first place. Clearly this, together with the fact that most students prefer to spend their holidays in the city, is an indication of the students' feelings towards the different qualities of life in the town and in the city.

How people express these dislikes and attractions has already been discussed. As the questionnaire results showed the extent to which the respondents were carried away by the quest for money explanations, to the detriment of all other reasons (see tables 7 and 8), I shall in the following chapter re-assess these reasons for migration in the light of actual data which I observed in the field; in other words, I shall examine the extent to which the "quest for money" explanation is borne out by observed facts about migration.



## NOTES

1. My colleague, Michael Singleton, kindly allowed me to draw on this material which he had compiled in 1973 while conducting a survey of the Catholic church in Western Nigeria. For the results of the survey, see Singleton 1974.
2. Unlike primary schools, secondary schools still charge fees, and involve many other expenses; the number of Iganna children in secondary schools is therefore extremely low.
3. S. Barnes (1974) holds a different view. See reference to her in chapter III:1.5.
4. Igannans often expressed the opinion that if the Government were to establish some industry in the area young people would find employment at home and no longer feel the need to emigrate. I believe that such solutions are rather simplistic, as they would stop only a limited number of people from emigrating; unless a solution can be found to the difficulties posed by the system of agricultural production in communities like Iganna the problem of rural-urban migration cannot realistically be faced. Finding such solutions is certainly beyond the scope of this study, but I shall try later on to argue that the root of the migration phenomenon lies in the way in which the present-day system of agricultural production erodes the rural community.
5. Information obtained by personal communication from Oyo teachers.
6. When political parties were organised in Nigeria during the 1950s fierce rivalries developed between members of the different parties in Iganna, with the result that many people were seriously threatened or even openly persecuted by their political antagonists. This period of lawlessness was halted when the army took power in 1966 and suppressed all political agitation.
7. The extent of young people's absence from farming is illustrated by the following statistics. In the period from July to August in 1974 (which is the period of most intensive work on the farm, and also coincides with school holidays) I conducted a head count of daily commuters between Iganna and the outlying farms. Out of an average number of c.2,000 commuters, only 220 were aged under 22. The ratio for girls under twenty-two was 1:13, for boys 1:6.
8. The gbajumo's inclination to incur debts is also discussed (in a similar vein) in Daramola and Jeje 1967.
9. Many of the early migrants in Lagos around the turn of the

century had been slaves in Iganna or other towns. For these people migration really was the path to freedom from bondage in a way not unlike that of the serfs who moved to the medieval occidental cities in order to free themselves from their former lords. Hence Weber's celebrated phrase "City air makes man free" (Weber 1958:94).

10. Interspersing Yoruba speech with English words has become very common; educated people especially excel in substituting English nouns and verbs for Yoruba ones throughout their conversations.
11. The total number of respondents to the questionnaire was 363, 245 boys and 118 girls, all between the ages of 11 and 22. (This, incidentally, is also the age category when most young people decide to emigrate). The average age was 16.5. Only seven pupils were natives of Iganna. Almost 80 percent were students from other Yoruba towns where emigration to the cities had become as significant as in Iganna. The remaining 20 percent came from city backgrounds, and although their vantage points were different, they were aware of the immigration into the cities by people from the rural areas. I would therefore claim that the answers provided by the respondents really do express the various strands of opinion and attitudes to rural-urban migration in Yorubaland. Given the large number of the sample, and the fact that their explanations of migration were in conformity with the random information I had gathered mainly from Iganna informants, I feel that the results of this questionnaire provide reliable working data for the analysis of the migration phenomenon in Iganna.
12. The wording of the questions is by informants.
13. As for the previous question, the reasons here reiterate the various points which were discussed in the preceding section.
14. For the meaning of "civilised" in the field, see section 2.23.
15. The detailed results of this question are shown below.

	Total	Boys	Girls
Hometown	31.7%	38.8%	16.9%
Other towns	29.7%	26.1%	37.3%
Big city	38.6%	35.1%	45.8%

Table 9 Places where respondents habitually spent holiday



These results show that the tendency to go to the cities is more pronounced among the girls than the boys. Accordingly, the girls' tendency to stay away from home is also greater. The 38.8% of the boys who stayed at home said that they usually help their fathers on the farm during the holidays.

16. In the two questions on migration the respondents were asked to mark the various reasons in order of importance. Many, however, failed to indicate their second and third choices; hence I could not systematically include these results in the discussion.

### CHAPTER III      MAKING A LIVING IN THE CITIES

In this chapter I shall first look at the process whereby young people leave Iganna and move to the cities in search of work and accommodation. From there I shall try to assess the general situation among Iganna migrants in Lagos and Ibadan as it was around 1975. Thirdly, I shall discuss the various strategies which the migrants pursue in their attempts to improve their financial and social situation. Finally, I shall present a brief characterisation of what I shall call the "household-firm" of the more successful artisans and traders. This type of indigenous business firm has risen in prominence, especially in the cities, at a time when the once large "household-firms" of the big farmers in the rural areas began to decline.

While presenting the case of the Iganna migrants in the cities I shall try to make it clear that, apart from a relatively small number who are financially successful, the great majority find it difficult to make ends meet<sup>1</sup>. This brings to the fore the disjunction between the stated motivations of most people and "reality", showing the insufficiency of the "quest for money" explanation on this plane. I attempt to explain this disjunction in terms of ideology and the deferment of expectation tactics of many migrants on the subjective level, while on the objective level I probe other, unstated reasons for migration by examining the system of agricultural production in present-day Iganna. This last aspect is the subject of the second part of the thesis.



## 1. Leaving Iganna and becoming an urbanite

### 1.1 Leaving Iganna

As already mentioned, it is predominantly young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five who have been emigrating in the last few decades. Those who leave home while still in their teens rarely have any professional skills at all; the growing number of primary school leavers are totally unskilled, and their academic knowledge often does not go beyond an elementary notion of the three Rs. Farming is the only skill learned by young men, but it is of no use to them in the cities. Girls have various household skills such as cooking, washing, looking after children and so on, which stand them in good stead later on. Boys may also sometimes have a certain familiarity with household chores.

Some migrants leave Iganna only after they have specialised in a craft. Many of the more traditional crafts such as wood-carving, smithing, pot-making and cloth-dyeing are still practised in Iganna, but less so in the cities. More modern crafts, such as tailoring, carpentry and bricklaying are, on the other hand, more in demand in the urban areas; hence the many Iganna craftsmen who have emigrated to the cities over recent years.

The decision to emigrate is often made when young people fail to get their parents' support to carry on with their education. As parents cannot then force their children to work on the farm, the young people's decision to emigrate is often accepted as an easy way out of an otherwise stalemate situation.

In some cases parents do help their children to become apprenticed, which usually requires three years' training but does not

cost as much as secondary school education. For some young people, apprenticeship to a master in a distant town becomes the occasion for leaving home.

On the whole, however, most Iganna migrants leave home without any professional skills at all. Anxious to get away from farming, and equally anxious to join their seniors in the cities, they set out in the hope of finding better pastures there. One migrant who had left Iganna in 1957 vividly recalled the days when he was still at school with nostalgia.

Each year, when our seniors returned home from Ibadan and Lagos during the New Year or Muslim celebrations, we used to be very much impressed by the nice clothes they wore, their sophisticated manners and the stories they told us. Then after I had left school, and there was no more money to go for further training I also wanted to go and find out for myself about all the wonderful things they had told us about.

Reminiscences of this type are very common among Iganna migrants, and express very well the motivations and circumstances behind decisions to leave home.

## 1.2 First experience of city life

When young migrants arrive in the city for the first time they can usually count on the hospitality of senior relatives or friends from Iganna already living there. Even when the arrival is unannounced and the intention of staying on in the city not clearly stated (as is often the case) the migrants can normally expect to be welcomed visitors. The most difficult time for the new migrants usually begins when their intention of staying is imparted to their hosts, and the problems of finding accommodation and work have to be faced. Only then can the crucial transition from a dependent visitor to an independent resident be made.



Although relatives and friends called upon for help in this way rarely refuse assistance initially, the extent to which they are able to help others obviously depends on their own position in the city. Resident migrants who have the reputation of being well-off and well-connected are therefore more likely to be called upon than those struggling to make ends meet. Though people always try to make the best use of their kin relations when they are in need of help, other contacts are also used, especially when these happen to be more influential than relatives.

If the young migrant is totally unskilled (as is often the case), the host may initially help him or her to find work as a domestic servant. As girls are better trained for domestic work than boys, they are mostly employed in this capacity; but boys too have an initial spell as domestic servants, although from the many accounts which I recorded I gathered that most of them went through a succession of rather short-lived, and often stormy, experiences with their various masters<sup>2</sup>. Thus, while girls often stay on as housemaids until they marry, boys quickly grow restless as house servants or shop assistants, as, apart from the bad treatment, wages paid for these jobs are barely enough to live on, let alone to support a family.

Those who do not go in for domestic work try to find work as labourers. Some do head portering, or push hand-carts (omolanke) for traders and market people. Others turn to hawking all sorts of articles along the streets, sometimes independently, but often in the service of a shop owner.

Though some types of labourer work, like carrying loads, can bring in good money, most Igannans look down on such menial

tasks and try to move on to other kinds of jobs. In more recent years especially young migrants seem less inclined to work as domestic servants, labourers and so on; they see these jobs as involving unnecessary hardships and not really getting them anywhere. The early reminiscences of many migrants illustrate the hardships they suffered at the hands of some masters, at whose beck and call they had to be; often they lived in appalling conditions, were underfed and desperate to save up some money. In such situations the practice of occult compensation was rife, fanning the masters' suspicions of being cheated and robbed. Hence also the continuing insecurity, constant conflicts and changes of employment.

This initial period is also the time when young migrants attempt to establish their own circles of contacts, often switching allegiance from their original hosts and building independently their networks within the social environment. Many migrants, however, never make it to this stage, becoming instead hopelessly stuck in unskilled jobs, or even entangled in illegal and criminal activities such as drug peddling, housebreaking, hooliganism and prostitution.

At this stage of transition most young migrants try to return home for the major feasts, spending their last few hard-earned pennies on clothes and entertainment. This is the kind of show that impresses the young potential migrants in Iganna.

### 1.3 Finding a steady occupation

After this initial odd-jobbing period young people realise that it is important for them to find a steady job if they want to settle down in the city. The three main occupations pursued are trading, craft specialisation and salaried



employment.

**1.31 Traders** The possibilities for Igannans to enter the world of business and trade in Ibadan and Lagos are very restricted. Iganna men have little experience of trade compared to men from some other Yoruba towns who have been pursuing this occupation for many years<sup>3</sup>. The women, like Yoruba women in general, often do some petty trading; it is very common for married women to earn some money by selling commodities such as cooked food, toiletries, confectionery, cigarettes and fruit. Some women hawk their wares along the streets, others display them on rickety tables in front of the houses where they are living. But few trade on a large enough scale to be able to afford renting a shop or a market stall; in this respect women traders from many other Yoruba towns outdo Iganna women.

The only spheres of trade where a number of Iganna migrants have been able to establish themselves on a somewhat larger scale are those of farm produce and native medicine. In 1975 there were five Iganna men who had established themselves as farm produce traders in Ibadan, while about half a dozen other men carried on the same trade in Mushin (Lagos). In both places Egba and Ibarapa traders by far outnumbered the Igannans; nevertheless, the Igannans seemed to be doing reasonably well inspite of all the competition.

Traders in the cities own or rent shops and stores where other traders from the rural areas can bring their lorry loads of farm produce, either selling them to the resident trader, or retailing themselves, using the trader's premises and giving him a commission on the sales.

These people who run the middle trade in farm produce between the rural markets and the city markets are predominantly women, including many Iganna women. Although these women are, strictly speaking, Iganna residents, their regular commuting makes them into a category of highly mobile people who are equally at home in the city environment or in the Iganna home community. Economically also they straddle both communities, as they transact business with Iganna farmers as well as with the urban traders and consumers<sup>4</sup>.

The other sphere of trade in Ibadan and Lagos in which Igannans are well-established is that of a type of native medicine called agumu<sup>5</sup>. The use of native medicine by local medical practitioners is as old and widespread as the Yoruba people themselves, and Iganna migrants specialise in a number of traditional recipes for treating common ailments. These recipes are now collectively referred to as agumu medicine. The preparations are made from a variety of plants, flowers, roots and minerals, but unlike the administration of many other types of native medicine agumu does not involve any incantations, sacrifices or any other ritual. Each remedy is usually sold in the form of a powder which has to be taken with maize gruel (eko gbigbona). The most common ailments for which agumu is recommended are digestive upsets, malaria fever, convulsions, gonorrhoea and ulcers.

Agumu traders in Ibadan and Lagos are organised in societies which are integrated into the Nigerian Herbalist Association. Among the most senior members of these societies one finds men and women who are very expert in preparing the various remedies. But outside these societies there are many people who, according to informants, concoct all sorts of useless remedies which they try to pass off as genuine ones.



Whatever the efficacy or otherwise of true or false agumu, the fact remains that the number of Igannans involved in the trade, both at home and in the cities, has grown inordinately. Most of the plants which are needed in the preparation of agumu are grown in Iganna, and some of the initial preparations of the various ingredients (as for instance drying the plants and grinding the substance to powder) are usually done there; then the substances are taken to the cities where the experts make up the actual mixtures which are sold to the public.

That the demand for native medicines like agumu should continue inspite of the fact that patent medicine is now easily available may be accountable by two factors. First, compared to patent medicine agumu remedies are inexpensive. Secondly, they are brought to the customer-patients by pedlars who double up as doctors, diagnosing ailments and prescribing remedies; whereas pharmacists and ordinary medicine shop keepers have a more impersonal relationship with the customers who call on them.

Although there seems to be enough money in agumu peddling to attract newcomers, agumu pedlars (who tend to be illiterate migrants, and especially women) cannot by any standards be termed affluent. In fact most of the ones I met complained that they were hard up, which is not surprising considering the low money investments and profits involved in the business; as a result, many eventually leave the trade for another occupation.

Judged by present-day city standards the trading exploits of the great majority of the Iganna migrants are on the whole very modest. This may be attributed to the fact that most of them came to the cities only recently with very little experience and few contacts in the world of business and trade.

As the vast majority of them engage only in petty trading and peddling with very small capital, their money turnovers and profit margins are also low. Basically the level of their trading activities in the cities is about the same as that of their counterparts in the hometown. Though many say that in the cities their goods sell better, the cost of living there is higher too; the claim, then, that most petty traders have improved their financial situation by emigrating to the cities becomes rather questionable.

1.32 Artisans Earlier I referred to instances of Igannans who emigrated after finishing their training as craft specialists; the majority of migrant craftsmen, however, were trained after leaving Iganna. Many young people (especially boys), following the initial period of odd-jobbing described earlier, feel the need to acquire a professional skill; if they have any savings from their years as pedlars or domestic servants, they use them to pay for an apprenticeship. Other migrants come to the cities specifically to learn a craft; although a craft can be practised anywhere in Nigeria by artisans who join the local guilds or unions<sup>6</sup>, many young migrants prefer to become apprenticed to city-based masters. The advantages are, first, that professional standards are usually higher in the urban centres; secondly, it is possible there to acquire certain skills which are not yet offered in rural towns like Iganna (as, for instance, electric welding, motor mechanics, radio and television maintenance).

Although craft specialisation is open to everyone, it is mainly primary and secondary modern school graduates who decide to pursue a career as artisans. (This, however, does not stop many of them from trying to find salaried employment after finishing their apprenticeship, for reasons which I shall



comment on later).

Craft specialists in Ibadan and Lagos usually have more work (since they have more customers) than their counterparts in the hometown; but competition is very intense, especially in the densely populated quarters where most Iganna migrants live. Also, the organisation of the craft guilds is often very inefficient, or virtually non-existent, as successful senior craftsmen usually find it more to their advantage not to be bound by union regulations concerning minimum charges; since they often enjoy the assistance of many apprentices whose labour is not paid for, they can afford to undersell their colleagues by charging less. The young Iganna craftsman, still paying for his initial outlay in tools and machinery, finds it extremely hard to attract sufficient apprentices and customers in order to maintain a certain standard of living, let alone to expand.

In areas like Mushin (Lagos) where free competition is rife one also finds a lot of factionalism and regionalism among people in the same profession. One young Iganna photographer who had learned his craft after completing secondary modern school recalled how some years earlier he was informed that there was work for local photographers with the Nigerian television. He applied, but soon found that only natives of Ilesha were taken on; presumably the person responsible for appointments was an Ilesha man himself, and thought it his duty to give preference to people from his area of origin.

A young Iganna printer informed me of a similar situation in his trade. In Mushin there are many printers who have their little printing presses, but no printers' guild exists. This has many disadvantages for most printers, since no one can be

prevented from undercutting the prices of others and thus attracting customers to himself. Responsibility for the absence of a guild lay with the established senior printers, who were all Ijebu men. By sticking together and cooperating as much as possible, they made it extremely difficult for young printers from other areas to develop their business.

1.33 Salary earners<sup>7</sup> The ambition of most young people who move to the cities nowadays is to find salaried employment. This is very difficult, however, since the majority have no professional qualifications and hardly any academic background. If they are determined to stay on in the city they may decide to specialise in a trade or craft as a stopgap solution before more rewarding salaried work comes their way. Fixed hours and the security of a steady income are the biggest attractions of salaried employment, and migrants would take such employment even if it were totally unrelated to their craft specialisation. Many salary earners among the Iganna migrants whom I interviewed told me that they were artisans by training.

One young Iganna migrant in Lagos had left home in 1963 after finishing primary school. During his first three years in the city he worked as a domestic servant. In 1966 he became an apprentice radio mechanic and obtained his freedom as master craftsman in 1970. After setting up his own repair shop in Mushin he started looking for salaried employment. Success came his way in 1973 when he became a clerk with a company in Lagos.

Migrants have three main reasons for pursuing salaried employment. First, they are anxious to provide a better education or training for their children than they themselves had. Secondly, they want to build a house in Iganna and/or in the city. Thirdly, they hope eventually to save sufficient capital to establish themselves as traders, landlords, contractors, businessmen etc. Ultimately, then, it is not the ambition of being



salary earners as such which attracts the migrants to the factories and business firms, but rather the expectation of accumulating sufficient cash to start business independently later on<sup>8</sup>.

The rush towards salaried jobs in the cities is very hectic and rough. Before any job can be secured the migrants depend on the goodwill of their friends and relatives to put them in contact with people in the "right" positions; these may be employees in the firm where the migrant hopes to find work and who, after receiving substantial bribes (often the equivalent of a month's salary) may recommend the candidate to the personnel manager, so that eventually a job may be secured. With a surplus of candidates for every available job, bribery is rife. The following is one of the many stories on this topic which I collected.

One Iganna man who had taken a correspondence course in accountancy after leaving secondary modern school was living in Ajegunle (Lagos) in 1967. His landlord there promised him a job as an accountant with a trading company, assuring him that he knew the manager and that the job could be secured for £20. After giving the landlord this amount, the Igannan turned up at the firm, where he found that it was a job as a labourer which had been allocated to him, for which he received only 6/8d a day. He was lucky, however, to eventually attract the attention of the General Manager who after listening to his plight recommended him to a business relation of his, and thus he finally got a good job in a factory.

Most of the salary earners among the Iganna migrants are either handworkers in factories, trading firms, contractor companies and so on, or else messengers and office clerks in firms. From the various classes of salary earners in Nigeria most Igannans are among the lower paid, and with their qualifications (or rather lack of them) they can have few expectations of promotion. Yet because of their more steady income these salaried employees

seem generally slightly better-off than artisans and petty traders. Whether or not these salary earners will eventually succeed in putting aside sufficient money to establish their own businesses is not easy to predict, as most of them are still relatively young; but given the high cost of living in the cities and the slim chances of promotion to better paid positions in the years ahead, attainment of the ultimate objectives remains rather doubtful.

#### 1.4 Marrying and raising a family in the cities

Migration by young people has meant earlier economic independence for them than was the case in the past. This economic self-sufficiency has enabled the migrant men to marry at a much younger age than was customary in the old days. Getting married and raising a family is the second important step (after obtaining steady employment) to becoming settled in the city.

Although so far Iganna migrants have tended to marry partners from their own town or area, most make their own choices and transact bridewealth gifts and money away from the home environment and without interference by parents and elders. No doubt this newly-found autonomy has been precipitated by the fact that in the cities young people have to rely on their own earnings at a very young age. In a later chapter I shall discuss the traditional system of agricultural production in Iganna in greater detail; here I will mention only that in the old days, although girls used to get married at around the age of twenty, men were only given a wife and plots of land necessary for the maintenance of their households when they were turned thirty. Nowadays most migrant men are already married with one or two children by the age of twenty-five. The financial responsibilities which they create for themselves in this



way often impairs their chances of saving up any money, or of improving their standard of living in any way. The high cost of living in the cities means that both husband and wife are expected to earn money. Though it is very much part of Yoruba custom for women to engage in remunerative work, the expectations that migrant women will contribute towards the family budget are higher. Hence the stated preference of many young men in the cities for girls who had had premarital experience of life there so that, among other things, they would have learned how to make ends meet in the urban environment. For their part, girls prefer to marry men who can give proof of their financial solvency and self-reliance, since it is they who are expected to be the main breadwinners for the household. This is why it is mainly the men who become craft specialists and salary earners, while the women divide their time between looking after the house and the children and doing some petty trading.

#### 1.5 Emigration to the cities: road of no return?

However much migrants may pinch and scrape, very often they find it difficult to keep their heads above water. Yet this apparent lack of success does not seem to drive them back to their hometown; on the contrary, the longer they stay on in the cities, the more estranged they become from their original home environment. First generation migrants usually have regular contact with the hometown, returning to attend special occasions and extending hospitality to visitors from home. They are often members of societies such as the Literates Union and the Iganna Development Union, the primary aim of which is to promote progress in the hometown and sponsor specific projects to that effect. But none of these commitments in any way implies that the migrants have any intention of returning home.

In an unpublished thesis, S. Barnes observes that "the great percentage of migrants leaves Lagos by the time 10 years have passed or at least by the time they reach their late 30s" (1974:68). She goes on to say that 48 percent expect to stay for short-term residence and 34 percent for the duration of their careers, and then retire home. This leaves 18 percent who "have elected to remain in the city as permanent residents" (ibid:69). Moreover, "more than half who are permanent residents are landlords and have lived in the city for 20 years" (ibid:69).

My findings among the Iganna migrants in Lagos did not support these statistics. While only about a dozen Igannans were in the process of acquiring or developing real estate, and only a small minority of salary earners were committed to career obligations in the city, the bulk of the self-employed artisans and petty traders showed no inclination to return to Iganna, not even those who had spent twenty or more years away from home. So what really causes most migrants to take deeper roots in the urban environments is not simply a matter of what type of occupation they engage in, and whether this is profitable or not; the reasons are complex, just as the reasons why people leave a rural town like Iganna are complex. In the case of the out-migration it was possible, by asking the people themselves, to establish some major recurrent themes underlying the phenomenon. The quantitative assessment of the relative importance of each of these major themes showed that at the level of individual consciousness the desire to earn more money was foremost in people's minds. The reality, however, is that the majority of migrants do not become rich. But aspirations of affluence, instead of souring, tend to become more and more internalised as the years go by, and faith in the possibility of affluence is espoused in place of actual material affluence.



This ideology has many eschatological overtones. The wealth of many city dwellers (including a few fellow migrants from the home town) which continuously stares the poor migrants in the face spurs them on to persevere in the hope that tomorrow will be better. This tomorrow may come only after a number of years, or it may not come at all in their lifetime; but where first generation migrants have faltered, it is hoped that the second generation will enter the promised land. Hence the kind of resignation typical of many older migrants who believe and hope that their children who are growing up in the city will have a better start in life than they have had. Hence also their double commitment to stay on in the cities: first to pursue their own careers, secondly to pave the way for their children.

## 2. General assessment of the Iganna migrants' situation in the cities

In the preceding analysis I argued, on the basis of my field observations, that the majority of the Iganna migrants belong to the lower income strata of the urban populations of Lagos and Ibadan. To make matters worse, the cost of living in Nigeria has been spiralling rapidly in the last few years, and as usually happens in such cases it is the small people like the petty traders and artisans who most severely feel the pinch of such inflation.<sup>9</sup>

In the same areas where many migrants eke out their miserable existence one also finds many traders, landlords, contractors and other wealthy people. Unlike the new elites who have become affluent as civil servants or highly-paid executives in private businesses,<sup>10</sup> the big trader-entrepreneurs are often self-made men and women who started their city careers as illiterate,

unskilled migrants from the rural areas.

Among the more elderly migrants who had come to the cities many years before the youth exodus in the 1950s were some outstanding Igannans. One of these, Alhaji Adesina, settled in Ebute-meta (Lagos), where he made his fortune as a contractor; another, Alhaji Gbonjubola, is now the proprietor-manager of a thriving saw-mill. Also in Ibadan was another successful man, owner of tanker lorries for the distribution of kerosene. Among the traders in farm produce, Alhaji Lamidi Owolola in Ibadan and Alhaji Baba-Yaya in Mushin (Lagos) were doing especially well. The first was expanding the business his father had started many years ago, while the second started trading only recently in the 1960s. There were even some artisans doing well; one motor mechanic, for example, already owned a very busy garage-repair shop in Surulere (Lagos) at the age of thirty.

Between these extremes of the really down-and-out migrants and the successful entrepreneurs are naturally many battling in the middle ground. But as far as present-day city standards are concerned, only two Iganna migrants could be termed really affluent: Alhajis Adesina and Gbonjubola, and this in the best traditions of entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

### 3. Migrants' aspirations and strategies for improving their financial and social position

Most Yoruba, both rich and poor, regard financial success as largely a matter of supernatural destiny. Accordingly, Igannans view worldly success or failure, to the extent that either depends on one's Ori (god of fate), with a good deal of fatalism.



But this fatalism is not complete, since the Ori is not all-decisive; other supernatural strategies exist for counteracting the course of bad destiny and turning it into good luck. In the traditional religious system, sacrifices might be made to placate one's Ori, and the intercession of other orisa can also be invoked.

Such beliefs naturally cannot be ignored, especially in a society which attaches much importance to the magico-religious domain. The migrants in the cities, however, have moved a long way away from the immediate sphere of influence of the ancestral orisa, especially as most of them have become either Christians or Muslims. But belief in the power of prayer and other supernatural media has hardly waned, which is why Muslim Malams and Christian preachers and prophets always find eager audiences of both rich and poor who believe that they can be helped in their financial activities. Many prophets of Christian sects, taking advantage of the growing literacy among the masses, have been publishing pamphlets containing advice and remedies for various problems. One of these pamphlets which was peddled at Ibadan bus stops at one time dealt with the interpretation of dreams in the following terms: "If you dreamt climbing a ladder it denotes that you will become a great person in your life, and many people will serve under you. Be prayerful so that success will come your way" (Adenuga 1973:5, *passim*). Another pamphlet explained how to make use of the psalms. Here too concern with financial matters was pervasive. Among the many psalms recommended for success in money matters, particular reference was made to psalm 92.

The reading of this psalm will enable you to earn success in your business. It will be most helpful if you can read along with it psalms 94, 20, 23, 25, 100 and 105. The psalm should be read three times over the water which you use for taking your bath.

Face the East for surely your prayer will be answered.  
(Oluyombo 1973:17).

That a person's good or bad luck in life, including financial success or otherwise, is subject to magico-supernatural influences over which certain people have power, is a widely held belief. Who these powerful people and supernatural agents are, and what means they use for directing a person's destiny, can vary considerably depending on the religious creed, literacy and sophistication of the individual; where the old illiterate farmer in Iganna may go and consult his local Babalawo (Ifa diviner) before embarking on an important financial transaction, the young migrant in the city is more likely to go to a Muslim diviner or an Aladura prophet when faced with a similar situation.<sup>11</sup>

In consistence with these attitudes, rich people are generally believed to have amassed their fortunes with the help of powerful magical medicine (juju). Extremely wealthy and powerful people are often assumed to have committed some very sinister deed, such as human sacrifice, prior to their success. Such beliefs may explain the popularity of the tragedy of Eda, a Yoruba Folk Opera adaptation of the medieval play "Everyman" which has had frequent stagings in the last decade by Duro Ladipo's National Theatre Company. Part of the appeal of the play (especially for city audiences) lay in its assumption that no one ever gets very rich without the help of outside (supernatural) agents. (Whereas the truth of the matter is that successful entrepreneurs here, just like successful entrepreneurs anywhere, often amass their fortunes by directly or indirectly exploiting the people working for them).

The most practical strategy that migrants pursue in order to



save money is to join esusu societies. This is a traditional type of money-pooling society which most migrants prefer to city banks. It functions in the following way. All members contribute fixed amounts of money at regular intervals. At each meeting the sum collected on that occasion is given to one of the members. At the following meeting the sum is given to another member, and so on until every member has received a sum<sup>12</sup>.

Among the Iganna migrants esusu societies are sometimes founded expressly to raise money for a certain project. In Mushin, for example, some twenty young craftsmen met every Sunday afternoon and collected money which they kept in a pool with the intention of eventually buying a small passenger bus and starting a public transport business. Although no joint firm of this kind had yet been started by Iganna migrants, many local bus services in Lagos were owned and managed jointly by groups of migrants from other towns.

It is more common, however, for Iganna migrants to practise ajo (the practice of making money contributions as in an esusu society) within one or more of the town-based societies to which they belong. For example, a group of members of the Baptist church may practise ajo at their weekly meetings, in which case the collection of money for this purpose will be only one item on the agenda. Similarly, members of the carpenters' guild may practise ajo at their weekly meetings, and so on. Individual contributions in these societies are usually low; some may save 25 Kobo, others 50, depending on their financial situation.

A more recent variation on the traditional method of doing ajo is the collection of daily contributions. Though this is rarely

practised in Iganna, it is very widespread in the urban areas. In Lagos, for example, the collection of daily contributions is organised on a city-wide basis. In a township like Mushin there are more than one hundred full-time collectors, each of whom may have as many as two hundred contributors. Every morning the collectors make their rounds of their contributors, then deposit the money into the bank for the double purpose of keeping it safe and accruing some interest for themselves. At the end of each month each contributor receives back the total of his or her contributions, minus the collector's commission which is the equivalent of one day's savings.

People from different towns and different ethnic origins participate in this scheme. Most of them are market women and petty traders, who use part or all of the savings returned to them each month to participate in the more traditional kind of ajo; so in fact the two systems are practised side by side.

The idea of saving money in order to collect interest on it is very new to most migrants. Government-controlled co-credit societies and cooperatives are gradually gaining popularity even in Iganna, yet there were no such societies functioning among the migrants in the cities. Business people and literates in general were busy opening savings accounts and collecting interests, but surprisingly few Iganna migrants showed any interest in this, inspite of the fact that in the cities they had easy access to banking facilities. This reluctance was explained to me by one man.

Why should we take our money to the bank, when they do not give us loans? Instead the banks use our money to give loans to people who are rich already.

I shall discuss the topic of savings again in the context of credit and debt relations in Iganna. At present I only wish



to point out the importance of these credit institutions for the migrants. Though many hope to build up good merchant capital through these institutions, the majority are able to save very little money in the long run, since the money saved on this daily and weekly basis is usually spent on overheads and rents, children's education, parties and clothes and on paying back creditors.

Other ways in which migrants try to raise business capital is by borrowing money or buying on hire purchase. Both of these, however, involve risks. Migrants do not usually have the securities required for bank loans; consequently when they want to borrow a substantial amount they have to resort to private moneylenders who charge very high interest rates (as, for instance, 5 Kobo per Naira monthly, i.e. five percent. Some even demand up to ten percent). These rates are naturally prohibitive, and therefore migrants often try to borrow from friends and relatives; but usually sums obtained in this way are rather small, and certainly do not add up to any substantial business capital.

Finally it should be mentioned that financial advancement, which invariably means moving up socially, involves a good deal of consorting ("moving along", as Igannans say) with the "right" people in the "right" circles. However much modern Nigerian society may have adopted the heavy bureaucratic machinery of western nations, getting things done still depends, ultimately, on face-to-face relationships, on knowing how and by whom people in key positions should be approached. This is all part of the political game which, in the case of Mushin township, was analysed very well by Sandra Barnes (1974, especially chapter VII).

In these urban contexts groups and networks of migrants from the same town tend to be formed for mutual support.

Iganna migrants show the same tendency to stick together, but as there are fewer well-established people among them (such as businessmen, politicians, landlords and civil servants) they cannot help each other as well, and it is therefore more difficult for them to make their way up.

**Corollary: Successful artisans and traders, or the modern type of "extended household firm"**

In this corollary I want to discuss some of the methods and strategies by which the more successful artisans and traders organise their businesses as far as personnel is concerned.

The main principle here is that the business is organised as much as possible like a household: the workers stand in a kinship-like relationship to the artisan or trader who owns and manages the business. Thus if the relationship employer/employee (salary earner) characterises the contractual nature of the modern firm, the indigenous firm departs from this in two ways. First, relationships are based mainly on loyalty and/or filial piety. Secondly, wages are not paid, which means that profit margins can increase considerably when the workforce is increased.

Big traders usually try to surround themselves with close relatives, since control over goods and sales requires the assistance of people who can be trusted, and whose livelihood also depends on the profits that are made. Some men traders work jointly with their wives, others with their sons or in partnership with one of their siblings, or more rarely with a very



close friend. Women traders who own their shops independently of their husbands are often assisted by their daughters or some other close female relative.

Traders' households always include children and young people who work in the business. First there are the trader's own children and the children of relatives over whom he has guardianship. Secondly, there may be unrelated boys and girls who are employed as shop-keepers or vendors. Such employment is especially widespread in the cities. These young people are paid a barely subsistence wage, with the result that they rarely stay for long if they can help it (see 1.6 ). Because these employees are very young the trader can treat them like his/her own children, which means reprimands and chastisements when their work output or behaviour is not satisfactory, or when they are caught pilfering. They can also be put to do other tasks, such as house cleaning and running errands.

Artisans increase their work output and money returns by increasing their labour force of apprentices whose work is not paid for. Traditional crafts were largely lineage-based in such a manner that children learned the various skills of the craft while growing up (e.g. drumming, smithing, weaving, and so on). Modern crafts, however, are organised differently; carpenters, bricklayers, tailors and others have to go through a formal period of apprenticeship which usually lasts about three years. At the beginning and at the end of that period the apprentice must pay a fee to the master; in the cities this is usually 20 Naira, whereas in Iganna only half that amount is expected. In this system apprentices are usually non-relatives of the master.

The actual productive work output of an apprentice may be very

low in the beginning, but after about six months it increases steadily, becoming profitable for the master. Some artisans who have many apprentices rarely touch a hammer or screw-driver themselves. The same applies to some printers, who spend all their time visiting customers and trying to get new orders. In this system it is not uncommon to see many artisans take on more apprentices than they actually need to cope with orders. The mere fact of having apprentices around is profitable and prestigious for the master. Firstly, young apprentices usually live in their master's house, and can be called upon to render any service, from working on the master's farm to cooking food. Secondly, they increase the master's reputation with the customers. This works both ways: when an artisan produces good work, both customers and apprentices are likely to flock to him. At the same time he can keep his prices down and take on large orders, since he does not have to pay wages to his apprentices.

Once traders and artisans are established in business and can work with a substantial money turnover, they gain a number of advantages over their smaller colleagues. First, they can buy in bulk, and therefore at lower prices. Secondly, they can afford to give credit, which is an important inducement to customers.

Within the wider context of this thesis the concept of the indigenous household-firm is very crucial, as shall become clearer in later chapters. At present I wish only to state briefly that in the traditional system of agricultural production in rural places like Iganna there were big farmers whose crop production was large because they could draw into their households the unpaid labour of slaves and iwofa (debt labourers). Though slave labour was phased out at the beginning of this century, debt labour by children ("pawns") continued



for as late as the 1940s in Iganna. Nowadays, however, the one-time big farmers with their large household-firms have virtually disappeared, and only those prepared to pay labourers' wages can increase their labour force and therefore their crop production.

In the present system in which the big traders and artisans draw into their business the labour force of young people and apprentices the household-firms of the one-time big farmers are, to some extent (though not without institutional changes), reproduced. How long it will be before this system of cheap labour collapses is hard to predict, since the whole infrastructure of Nigerian economy still rests on it. As far as my present analysis is concerned, I can only point out that the disappearance of the big farmer's household-firm and the emergence of the big trader's or artisan's household-firm in the towns and cities is consistent with the modern phenomenon of rural-urban migration. While trade and craft production continue to flourish in the urban areas thanks to the cheap labour of children and apprentices, people will continue to flock to the towns and cities in the hope of becoming successful business people. Young migrants will not mind working as shopkeepers and apprentices for a short time, if afterwards they can have apprentices working for them. Thus the whole system perpetuates itself.

In 1974 the Federal Military Government of Nigeria passed a number of laws obviously aimed at checking the various ways in which young people can be exploited. In the Supplement to the Official Gazette of June 6 1974 it was laid down that apprentices between the ages of twelve and sixteen may not be employed without the written consent of their parents or guardians. This consent document, moreover, must be submitted for approval

by an authorised labour officer (para.49:1). The same Supplement decreed that apprentices were entitled to wages, and in some cases also to lodging facilities and sick leave in remuneration for their services (para.49:2b, iii, iv, v, and para.50).

An official document of this kind is certainly a significant step towards the abolition of a deeply-rooted social institution, even though few people may be aware of its existence. Nevertheless, as with the practice of slave and debt labour, present-day apprentice labour will probably live on for a long time, at least unofficially, in spite of the enactment of laws prohibiting many practices associated with it. Only radical political changes which would make better alternatives available to young people could possibly administer a swift death to it.

#### 4. Conclusions

In the foregoing we saw that, apart from a handful who have had some financial success, the majority of migrants lead a hand-to-mouth existence, with few possibilities of rising above it. Such being the case, why do people continue to emigrate from Iganna, and why is the ideology that affluence will be found in the city still persistent?

One explanation for this paradoxical situation was in terms of urban acculturation. Initially, young migrants, surrounded by affluent people in the city, are confident that they too will make good in time. The opportunities of earning money at a young age, and the possibility of marrying younger than was customary in Iganna, undoubtedly kindle this initial enthusiasm;



but with a family to support at city prices most migrants soon find that it is difficult enough to steer clear from incurring debts, let alone to save money. Yet as the years go by the migrants are also gradually being moulded into the urban way of life; it is in the city that they earn their living, however laborious; it is in the city that they have their friends, their societies and clubs, it is in the city that their children were born and bred. Apart from all this the city has, after all, a generally more lively atmosphere than the hometown. In any case, returning home without tangible evidence of success would mean loss of face. Thus, whether or not migrants succeed financially, once they have stayed in the city for some time they grow roots in the urban society, gradually becoming estranged from their rural backgrounds.

Another way in which the disjunction between ideology and reality was explained was by reference to beliefs in fate and good luck (see section 3). Such beliefs are consistent with the popular assumption that Nigeria is a classless society in which anyone can make it to the top with either brains or money, and preferably with both<sup>13</sup>. Thus the ideology of urban affluence is internalised by those who do not achieve it, and their hopes and expectations are transferred to their children.

It was also mentioned that migrants will not admit their lack of success, and put on an expensive show on their occasional visits to their hometown (see ch.II:2.21, references to gbajumo). This has the double effect of impressing young people at home, and of jeopardising the migrants' chances of improving their real financial situations.

In this chapter I wanted to show that the meagre financial

exploits of the majority of Iganna migrants severely challenges the popular assumption that in the cities people achieve greater affluence than in the rural areas. The fact that most migrants prefer to stay on in the cities, whether they earn good money or not, is a confirmation that the various other reasons underlying rural-urban migration which were examined in Chapter II were actually more important than was suggested by the questionnaire scoring. Above all, the questionnaire results revealed more about popular assumptions and wishful thinking vis-à-vis life in the cities than about the realities encountered by each individual.

Before attempting any conclusions that take us beyond the migrants' own perceptions of rural-urban migration, I shall in the following chapter examine the situation in Iganna in order to find out to what extent the popular claim that farming is unrewarding can be maintained.



## NOTES

1. Information collected on the occupations of 568 Iganna men in Ibadan and Lagos (through the Iganna migrant societies in these cities - see Appendix II) showed that 94.4 percent were either self-employed artisans and petty-traders (73.3 percent), or low income bracket employees such as factory workers, messengers, drivers and labourers (21.1 percent). The remaining 5.6 percent were either self-employed (shop owners, contractors etc. - 2.1 percent), or higher income bracket employees such as office workers, soldiers and teachers (3.5 percent). Personal interviews with 94 of these migrants in various walks of life suggested that especially those who belonged to the first category of 94.4 percent found it difficult to make ends meet in the cities. Going by their lifestyles and living conditions (overcrowded rented rooms, absence of any amenities), they seemed to have ample reasons to complain.
2. Hardly any Iganna natives can afford domestic servants. The employers Iganna boys and girls work for are usually white-collar workers of various ethnic backgrounds.
3. The most experienced and successful traders in Ibadan and Lagos are to be found among the Ijebu and Egba (Abeokuta) migrants.
4. Although Iganna women traders in farm produce are the main suppliers of Iganna wholesale traders in the cities, both parties are free to conduct themselves independently, which indeed happens all the time.
5. Agumu medicine is also practised by migrants from other small towns in the Iganna area. But although Iganna practitioners have no monopoly, it was generally agreed that they excelled in it more than others, both because they were more expert and because such large crowds of them were involved in the trade.
6. In most towns and villages (at least in the Yoruba-speaking parts of Nigeria) craftspeople and traders form their own unions, which non-natives can join on payment of membership dues. Normally membership of the local union is a condition to being allowed to practise a trade or craft. But in many places, and especially in large cities, union membership is not very rigorously enforced. Craft guilds also confer certificates of graduation, or freedom to the apprentices of their members.
7. In the blanket term "salary earners" I include factory workers, office messengers, nightwatchmen, hospital orderlies

and so on, as well as the better paid white-collar workers.

8. This point was also observed by Barnes (1974:223) among Yoruba migrants in Lagos.
9. In a report on Nigeria's "inflation spiral" in 1976 Hutchinson stated that "A reasoned estimated is that (inflation) is running at 40% a year - and showing no signs of slowing down" (1976:1329). The author then went on to show the increases that had affected the consumer price index between January 1975 and May 1976. In the case of food prices the index figures had gone up from 294 to 457.1, which was an increase of 163.1 in only 17 months.
10. The new elites in the cities tend to live in more residential areas, in the custom of expatriates of the colonial era. Examples of such areas in Ibadan are Bodija and Jericho, with Ikoyi and Victoria island as the most exclusive residential areas in Lagos.
11. In a survey of the Catholic church in southwestern Nigeria it was found that many lay people thought that Catholic priests, apart from their sacramental powers, also had supernatural powers that could help people in their more material everyday problems, but that in fact most priests were reluctant to make use of such powers. See Singleton 1974.
12. A more detailed analysis of this type of credit institution is given in Bascom 1952.
13. Discussing the possibilities for the emergence of social classes, Beer refers to Barbara Lloyd's discussion of the great advantages in both home environment and educational opportunities enjoyed by the children of elite parents, and her conclusion that "the children of the educated elite will, when their generation reaches maturity, constitute a distinct social group, perhaps a class" (B.Lloyd 1966:335). From there Beer goes on to say that the "traditional" acceptance that success in achieving wealth is a result of good fortune rather than the result of belonging to a privileged social group may leave the "mass" content. But this acceptance could be threatened in two ways: by an increasingly self-generating elite rejecting other traditional values, such as the principle that success must be shared, and that the successful should give all help possible to their family and kinsmen to achieve similar fortune; or if the "mass" is successful in throwing up a new leadership of its own which does not aspire to elite status (Beer 1976:6).



## CHAPTER IV      PRESENT-DAY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN IGANNA

In this chapter I shall examine two observations that challenge the assumption that farming in Iganna is unrewarding. The first has to do with the influx of various people into the area (at a time when young Igannans are emigrating to the cities): immigrant farmers from other Yoruba towns, seasonal migrant labourers from outside Yorubaland and, more recently, Fulani pastoralists with their cattle. The second has to do with the growing demand for foodcrops by the congested urban populations, and the subsequent rise in food prices. In addition, with the expansion of long distance trade in farm produce (which is predominantly a female occupation), the scope for Iganna women's trading has expanded.

Thus, some farmers and some traders in farm produce must be doing good business. In order to find out what the situation is like in Iganna today I shall discuss the suitability of the area for farming in the first place, then present a model of the spatial structure and social organisation of the farms and markets.

### 1. Agricultural potentials in Iganna

By tradition Iganna is predominantly an agricultural community, with suitable climate, soil and vegetation, as well as plentiful land. Although in modern times there has been an increasing number of people specialising in occupations other than farming, agricultural production remains the main focus of

people's activities. Even among the many craftsmen, traders and hunters only a few do not have any plots which they cultivate at least part of the time. Farming is a man's occupation, but women are involved in the later stages of agricultural production, especially in the processing of the crops and in the trade in farm produce.

### 1.1 The natural environment

The northwestern part of Yorubaland is characterised by soft rolling orchard-like savannah. Iganna lies in this plateau area interspersed with granite hills and rock outcrops<sup>1</sup>. Some of the highest hills reach altitudes of 1600 to 1800 feet. Annual rainfalls lie between 0 and 10 inches during the dry season (November to March) and 20 to 50 inches during the wet season (April to October). The total annual rainfall in this part of Nigeria lies between 40 and 70 inches. In table 10 a more detailed record of annual rainfall in the area is given over the period 1963-1974.

Year

1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
74.5	35.1	35.0	61.4	51.0	64.6	51.4	44.4	47.2	41.5	42.7	57.5

Inches of rainfall

Table 10<sup>2</sup> Rainfall in Iganna area, 1963-1974

As can be seen from this table, the total rainfall over this period of twelve years was 606.3 inches, which leaves an average of 50.5 inches a year. Early sporadic rains can fall in February, but more frequent showers should be expected



towards the end of March. During the following three months (April to June) there is a gradual increase in rainfall. The really heavy rains fall in July and the beginning of August. Then a dry spell follows, but the rains return again in September until the middle of October, when the dry season sets in. This is the time (especially December and January) when the Harmattan wind blows in southerly direction. When this happens, night-time temperatures can drop to  $12^{\circ}$ - $15^{\circ}$ C., while daytime maximums of  $35^{\circ}$ - $40^{\circ}$ C. are not uncommon; but apart from these short Harmattan periods, day-night variations are not so drastic. On the whole temperatures throughout the year stay above  $20^{\circ}$ C., rising to over  $30^{\circ}$ C. at noon.

Natural vegetation shows much variety. Even though Iganna lies north of the coastal forest belt, the more open savannah-like landscape in the area regularly merges with dry open forest, and southwesterly of the town even with tracts of very dense forest. Soils consist mainly of sandy clays in the savannah-like areas, while the more densely forested land contains the gray or black clays which generally prevail in those areas where cocoa is cultivated (Ojo 1966:70).

Wildlife in the area is considerably depleted. Big game such as elephants and buffaloes has now disappeared altogether; the biggest animal remaining is the western hartebeest. Antelopes, duikers and wild pigs are also to be found. Small game such as cane rats and other rodents is still abundant, while birds, in particular partridges and guinea-fowl, are plentiful in the savannah. Fish are more rare in the area: most streams and rivulets dry up during the dry season, and only bigger rivers like the Ofiki can hold water throughout the year. When the Ofiki stops flowing after the annual rains the fish survive the dry season by congregating in the deeper pools where the water stays.

## 1.2 Farm plots, crops and annual cycle.

When new farm plots are made the first task is to clear the bush. This is usually done in the beginning of the year (February to March), towards the end of the dry season after the savannah grass has been burnt. The surface soil is upturned with the hoe, roots are cut and mounds (ebe) are made in which the seeds of the various crops are deposited. These mounds are spaced at distances of two to three feet along parallel rows. The not too heavy trees and shrubs are cut and uprooted, but heavier trees are simply cut down or made to die and the stumps are skirted around.

A first planting season starts around late February and continues throughout March, and in some cases even as late as April. The exact timing of the first planting is closely related to the time of the sporadic early rains. The most important crops which are planted at that time are maize, melons (egusi) and beans. Subsidiary crops include millet, cotton, okra, peppers, tomatoes and other vegetables, especially various kinds of spinach.

The first maize crop is usually harvested in June and July. Some of the early maize can be used for immediate consumption, but the bulk of the crop is left in the farms where it is stacked on wooden platforms which are raised about two feet off the ground and covered with bundles of thatch. There the maize is left to dry, sometimes until as late as December or January in the following year.

The melon crop is harvested in July after the heavy rains have started and the water in the streams has begun to flow again. This is necessary because washing the melon seeds requires an



abundance of water.

During the short dry spell in August farmers busy themselves with the preparation of plots for a second maize crop. At the same time other crops such as okra, millet, and especially beans are also planted. Harvesting of these crops is from October to November.

Cassava can be planted at any time during the annual rains. After planting it needs a minimum of nine months to mature, but often farmers let it stay on the farm much longer, sometimes not harvesting it for three years.

Yam is another major crop of which there are many varieties in Iganna. The earliest yams are planted in November and the latest in February. Yams need about eight months of gestation in the ground. The first are dug towards the end of June, while the latest may be kept in the ground until February in the following year. The bulk of the yam crop is processed to flour (elubo) which can be stored for very long periods.

The general lay-out of the farms often looks rather disorderly because of the mixed cropping which is commonly practised by Yoruba farmers (Ojo 1966:61-2). The reason for this is that the same plots are made to carry different crops, often planted at different times and consequently also maturing at different times. Moreover, many of the subsidiary crops which farmers plant for their own use do not require separate plots; instead these are grown on any available patch of land in or around the farm. The same applies to lime, orange, banana, pawpaw and mango trees, which most farmers in the area grow only as subsidiary crops.

A distinctive feature of Yoruba farming characteristic of the Iganna area is the method of shifting cultivation. Depending on the quality of the soil and the type of crop which is planted, the plots are used for periods of three to five years, then left to fallow from five to ten or fifteen years (although fallowing periods nowadays tend to be shortened for reasons which will be discussed later).

In the more densely forested farming sector southwest of Iganna cocoa has been cultivated as an export crop since the late 50s. The methods of growing cocoa there are the same as those practised in other parts of southwestern Nigeria (see Galletti et al 1956, Berry 1975). The cocoa plantations are made in clearings in the forest, with the trees planted at close distances of about eight feet from each other. Plantations need up to seven or eight years to mature and yield good harvests, but small yields are made by the fourth year. In the early stages farmers use the forest clearings for all the usual foodcrops, as well as large peppers (ata rodo) and cocoyams which grow well in the forest but were virtually unknown in Iganna in the past.

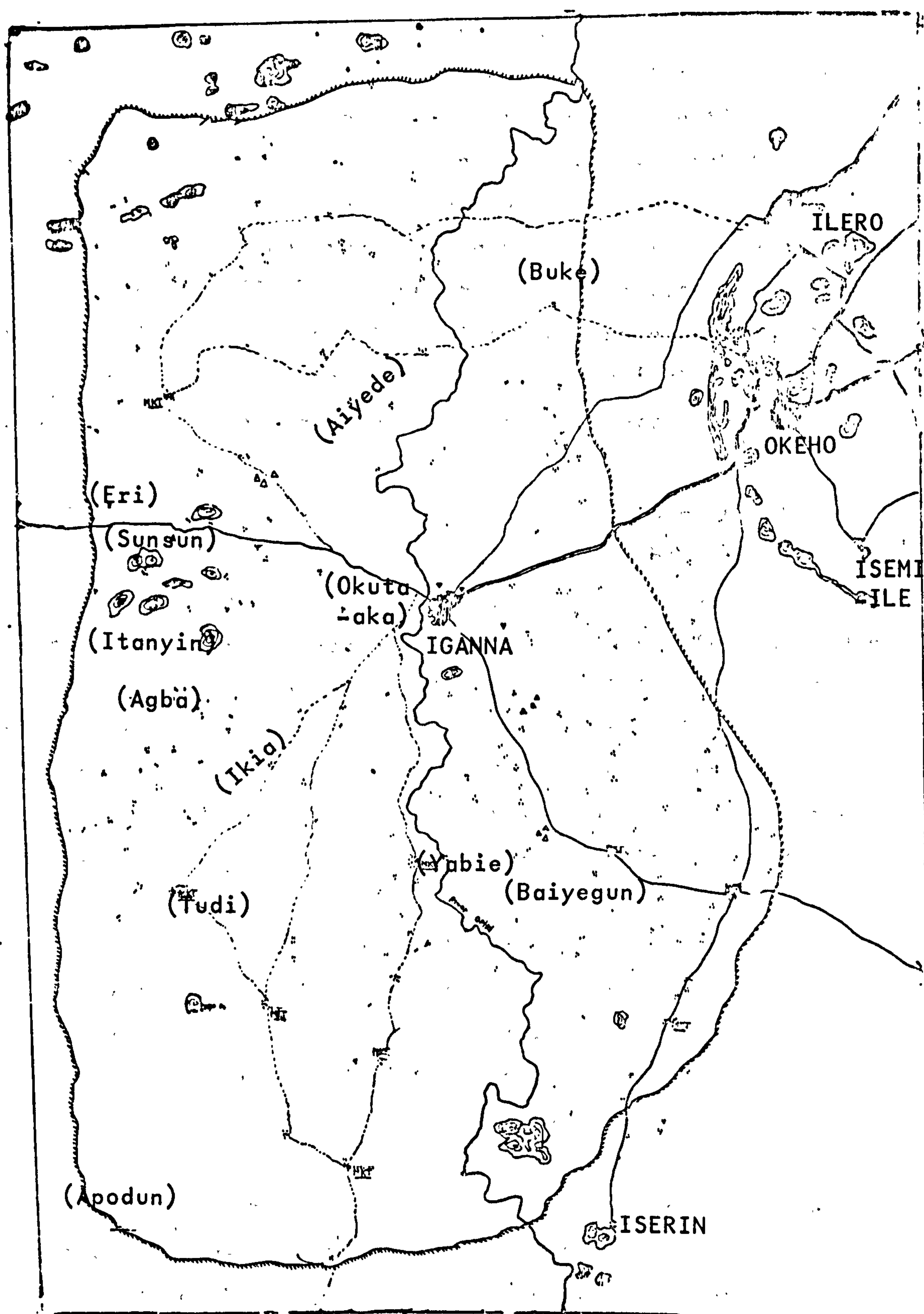
Tobacco was introduced in Iganna by the Nigerian Tobacco Company in the late 40s. Although the more open savannah-like land which characterises most of the Iganna farming district is well suited for tobacco cultivation, not many farmers cultivate this crop; but other towns in the area, such as Iwere-ile, Itasa and Idiko-ago, grow tobacco more intensively. Tobacco seeds are first planted in January in special nurseries near a water course. In March the seedlings are transplanted into the fields. The first harvest takes place in the second half of May. In June a second crop is planted, and if the climatic conditions are favourable often a third crop can be obtained before the annual droughts set in. After harvesting the leaves



are collected in especially constructed mud barns which are heated with wood fires. When this treatment in the processing plant has been completed the farmers sell their crops directly to the Company.

### 1.3 Land

The most casual observer cannot help noticing that northwestern Yorubaland is comparatively thinly populated; the scattered farms dotted all over the wide rolling savannah will undoubtedly corroborate the general impression that there is still an abundance of farmland in the area, inspite of the presence of many farmers from other towns and the practice of extensive bush fallowing. For the Iganna district it is not difficult to validate such impressionistic statements with quantitative data relative to the extensiveness of the land and the population density in the area. Map 3 indicates (at least tentatively, in the absence of official documents<sup>3</sup>) the outer perimeter of the land over which Igannans claim exclusive rights, as opposed to land claimed by the people of the neighbouring towns. The Iganna land that lies north of the town stretches out more than ten miles in the direction of Ikomu, while in southerly direction it extends deep into the Igangan forest reserve, up to approximately fifteen miles south of the town. Both in west-ernly direction (towards Iwere-ile) and in easternly direction (towards Okehó), the boundaries lie at distances of about six miles. A fair estimate of the total extent of Iganna farmland based on this perimeter indicates about 275 square miles. Consequently, with a total population of 19,000 (see Table 1), population density in the Iganna area is only about 69 per square mile. This is considerably lower than the average density figures for the whole of Yorubaland (or more precisely, the former Western Region), which were estimated at 90 in 1948-9 (Buchanan and Pugh 1958:58) and 134 in 1952-3 (Oluwasanmi 1966:62).<sup>4</sup>



Map 3. Approximate boundaries of land over which Iganna's descent groups claim exclusive rights; indicating also the approximate location of towns destroyed during the 19th. century wars (see bracketed names).



Moreover, out of these estimates only about 54 per square mile can be resident Iganna natives (see II.2, where I estimated this population at about 15,000). It is therefore not surprising to hear informants state that farmland is plentiful in Iganna, and that it is readily given to people who ask for it, whether they are natives or strangers. These assertions are borne out by my own observations, and accord with Yoruba custom (see Fadipe 1970:170). Okurume, in his survey of Yoruba agricultural communities, also notes the abundance of farmland in the Oyo North Division: "...land....is in fact not a constraint at all in the savannah areas of Oyo North (1969:47).

Land itself is communally owned by members of the descent groups (idile). This, however, does not stop those who exert the rights to allocate the land to individuals from welcoming non-members of the descent group to use the land for farming. Once an outsider has been given permission to cultivate a piece of land, his rights to continue his farming activities and eventually to transmit them to his own descendants also tend to accrue. Though in principle it is the king who owns all the land (hence the Yoruba adage Oba l'o n'ile), in the course of time it happens that more and more descent groups claim exclusive rights to certain pieces of land originally allocated to them by the king. This is particularly the case for town land on which people have built their lineage compounds and where they have buried their ancestors, but on farmland too rights can be acquired by the lineage in perpetuity.

Although these general principles apply to ownership of land in Iganna, some exceptions must be made to the adage "all the land belongs to the king" (in this case, the Sabiganna). Within the present perimeter of the Iganna farming district (see Map 3) there are large portions which originally belonged to

neighbouring towns which were sacked or abandoned in the nineteenth century wars. The descendants of the refugees from these towns who subsequently settled in Iganna, though they submitted to the overlordship of the Sabiganna by adopting Iganna citizenship, never actually abandoned their exclusive rights over their original land on which they continue to farm and hunt. Consequently, anyone wishing to farm within the perimeters of the ruins of these old towns and their surrounding farming districts has to seek permission in the first place not from the Sabiganna, but from the chief or head of the compound whose ancestors hailed from the town in question.

Though it would not be within my competence to plot the exact boundaries of the land belonging to each of these groups, in Map 3 I have indicated the approximate location of these areas by the names of the towns that used to stand there. The area marked "Sabiganna" refers to the land which has been under the authority of the kings of Iganna right from the foundation of the town. This area forms the greatest part of the total farming district. The second largest area is under the control of the bale (chief) of Aiyede's quarter in present-day Iganna. The bale of Ikia's quarter also controls a large part of the land southwest of Iganna town, and the lineage of Baiyegun controls a rather extensive area southeast of the town.

Though the question of land ownership and rights in land will be discussed further in the context of kin-based groups, it is worth stressing here that apart from some rigid and historically based exclusive rights in land the system of land usage for the purpose of farming is extremely flexible; no individual in need of land will be left without if uncultivated land is available. Requests for land are turned down extremely rarely, and then



only if the applicant has an unsavoury reputation, or is in some other way personally undesirable.

Finally, when land is given to someone who does not belong to the descent group that owns the land the grantor may demand certain gifts. In the case of the grantee being a native of Iganna, a basket of yam flour may be requested on the occasion of a feast, while non-native farmers pay a nominal annual rent (isakole). However, the practice of demanding isakole in cash payments rather than in kind is new in Iganna, and seems to occur only in the southwestern sector where cocoa is grown. In all cases what is demanded of the grantee is very little, and bears no direct relation to the amount of land that is occupied. In Iganna isakole is paid, according to Elias' analysis of the custom,

....not indeed as a token of recognition of the chief's ownership of the land allocated, but merely as an earnest of the grantee's bonafides to acknowledge that he is not himself claiming as owner, and also as an expression of his gratitude for the bounty thus conferred (1951:102).

The availability of good farmland and the readiness with which it is granted to those who demand it thus leads me to the conclusion that the emigration from Iganna to the cities cannot be explained on the grounds that any of these factors constitutes a sufficient constraint to account for such migration in the first place. What is paradoxical is that we see many non-native farmers settling in the area, attracted by the very opportunities which Iganna migrants seem to discard. At this stage of the discussion the only explanation I can offer for this migration from one rural area to another is in terms of availability of suitable farmland. Earlier I mentioned the abundance of farmland in the Oyo North Division; now I must qualify this by adding that some towns have an excess of farmland, while others

are short. (The reasons for such uneven distribution usually have to be looked for in the past history of the towns concerned, but this question need not detain us here). Hence the most obvious explanation that accounts for migration from one rural area to another is the need for farmland. Okeho and the adjoining townships of Aiyetoro-oke, Ilaji-oke and Iwere-oke, with a total population of over 45,000, are examples of towns which are short of farmland. Many farmers from these towns are in fact farming on land that belongs to other towns in the same Oyo North Division.

On Iganna land one will also find farmers from a number of neighbouring towns such as Okeho and Awaiye. Some settlers have come from even further away - from Iseyin, or the Egba-Egbado towns south of Iganna. These last settlers are spurred on not so much by the need for ordinary farmland for foodcrops, as more specifically by the desire for the forest land southwest of Iganna town which is suitable for the cultivation of cocoa.<sup>5</sup>

Before attempting any further explanations concerning the Igannan's lack of interest in their land and the interest shown in it by outsiders I shall look at the farming district in some greater detail, and discuss the various zones of human activity related to agricultural production within it.

## 2. Spatial structure and social organisation of farms and markets

When we look at the ways in which Igannans use their environment in order to make a living we may distinguish distinct zones of agricultural activity which have developed around the



town in the course of time. Spatially this pattern can best be schematised as a model consisting of a set of concentric circles within which Iganna town is the centre. This is not to imply that Iganna and its surrounding farming district constitute a self-contained agricultural or socio-economic system on their own; Igannans' activities on the land may be primarily focused on their hometown, but the impact of other towns can also be felt. First, there is the presence of many non-native farmers who retain links with their towns of origin even though they are cultivating land that belongs to Igannans. Secondly, through the impact of commercial farming which is mainly geared towards the distant urban markets, the traditional position of Iganna as the prime focus of people's activities in the area is now increasingly being subordinated to the growing demands of these new centres. For historical and heuristic reasons, I shall present this model in two stages, first by showing a basic single-focus model and secondly by discussing the present-day more complex multi-focus model.

## 2.1 The basic single-focus model

This corresponds largely to the more traditional folk model which the Yoruba people in general have of themselves in relation to their environment. Although the objective spatial (observable) reality of this model is now to some extent lost (as will be shown by the second model), subjectively it still lingers on in the minds of many Igannans, especially the more conservative and the elderly, as a relic of a type of kingdom now obsolete. In this sense, then, the model appears more as an ideologico-cultural heritage which has long since been overtaken by current politico-economic structures.

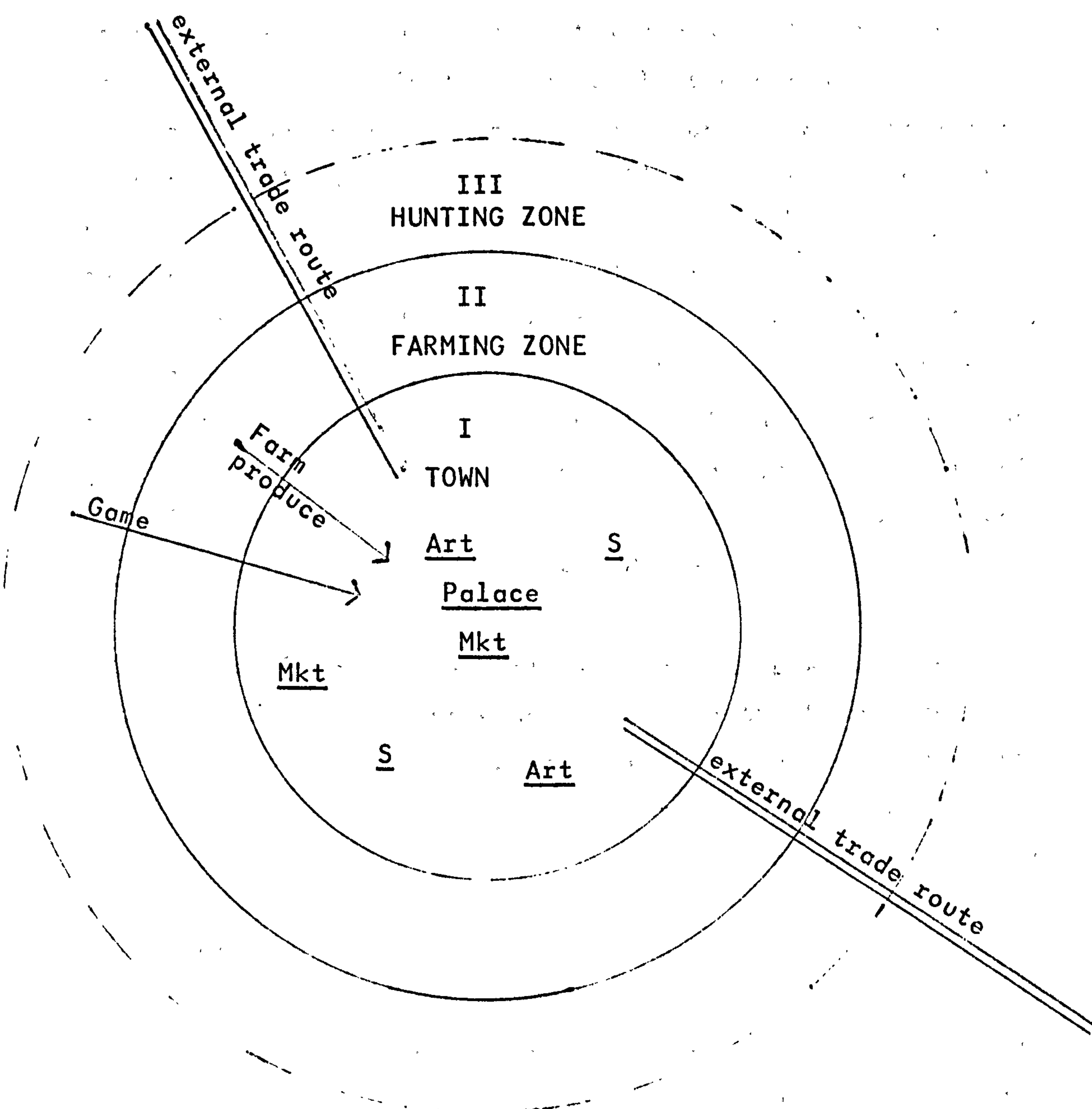
As well as identifying themselves with their idile and with

other groupings in which they are incorporated, people see themselves primarily as citizens of their hometown. In the centre of such a town life revolves around the royal palace (aafin) and the central or king's market (oja-oba). Scattered throughout the town are more markets, as well as the many workshops of the craftspeople. Finally, located in the various compounds and quarters one finds the shrines of the ancestral orisa. (see Fig.1). It is within this town context that most social and socialising activities take place: this is the arena for politics, for trade and marketing, for rituals and festivals.

Outside this cultural environment there is the bush, or the domain of nature, which surrounds the town on all sides. People go to the bush primarily to work, and not really to spend their lives there. They make their farms within walking distance of the town and thus partially impose, by farming, their culture on nature outside the town boundaries. For practical purposes farmers may erect rudimentary huts so that they can stay out of town for several days during the busy season; but even in cases when many farmers cluster together and a hamlet develops, residence in such a place is only temporary, as people's "homes" (ile) always remain in their compounds in the town. It is this farming zone of partially cultivated land surrounding the town which constitutes the second concentric circle in the model (see II in Fig.1).

In the savannah-like areas of northwestern Yorubaland people made farms only in the open countryside, keeping their distance from the thick bush and forest. This may be explicable to a large extent by the fact that making farm plots in the open savannah, although tedious, is easier than making clearings in the dense forest. But this practice of skirting the thick bush when making farms was also tied in with other socio-cultural





- Mkt . . . Market
- Art . . . Artisan's workshop
- S . . . Shrine

Figure 1. Single-focus model of "traditional" Yoruba town

factors typical of the savannah towns. Being first and foremost town dwellers, the people viewed the uncultivated domain of nature outside as a world that was basically inhospitable if not outright hostile to humans. This distrust of a natural environment dangerous to humans found consistent expression in the fear of wild animals, and in beliefs in various spirits associated with the hills, the rivers and the forests. The 'bush sprites' (iwin) favourite abodes are popularly believed to be the thickets and the forests, and according to informants it is on account of these creatures that farmers skirt the forests, so as not to trespass on their favourite grounds and provoke their ire. Added to these supernatural fears are also fears of more earthly kind: isolated in the bush, people would provide easy targets for raiders and robbers.

As providers of meat, the hunters were best prepared and equipped to handle the dangers associated with the bush: they had arms; they had intimate knowledge of the unbeaten tracks, and they excelled in magical lore. Hunters were also put to the task of policing the land and of acting as scouts in the frontier zones against possible incursions by outside enemies (Fadipe 1970:251).

Spatially one might refer to the hunters' domain as the whole of natural environment outside the town. Whereas farmers would stay within reach of the town, and thus tended to deplete that surrounding area of certain types of game, hunters would frequent the forest areas far beyond the farmland, which for them constituted a kind of game reserve. These forests and waste lands often served as frontiers, extending into no-man's-land zones between adjoining towns. Thus the traditional avoidance of forest areas by farmers may be further rationalised as a strategic decision to maintain a tract of waste land and forest



in the areas bordering with other (sometimes hostile) neighbouring kingdoms. From this point of view it was a definite advantage to leave the supervision of such areas in the hands of a corps of professional hunters.

The avoidance of the forested areas by the farmers can also be explained with reference to Yoruba division of labour, in accordance with which the production (or rather the provision) of meat and the production of food crops, both of which involved activities in the natural environment surrounding the town, resulted not only in specialised occupations but also in spatial divisions of the land into distinct areas<sup>6</sup>. Thus one may look upon the hunters' domain as consisting of the bush and forest zone beyond the cultivated land nearer the town. Schematically this area may be represented as a third concentric circle surrounding the town (see III in Fig.1).

Before the imposition of British rule and the development of the urban centres, there was practically no long distance trade in farm produce. This meant that the crops which farmers produced were consumed mainly within their own towns. Whatever else was hunted or gathered from the land was primarily directed to the town (see arrows in Fig.1). In this system, the town markets were the nodal points in the market rings between the towns and along the trade routes. Hence the export of locally produced goods and the import of commodities from other towns were transacted in the centres of the chiefdoms and kingdoms. For this reason the trade routes in the model are shown as converging on the town centre, with the arrows giving the direction of the flow of import and export commodities.

If such was the ideal model of the traditional Yoruba town, constituting a small universe on its own in which the town as

a socio-political centre kept the distinct spheres of economic activities within their proper orbits, it will be shown that in the case of Iganna some radical changes have taken place.

## 2.2 The complex multi-focus model

In present-day Iganna not only do people relate to their environment in a more complex way, but that very environment itself has become more complex and less homogeneous as a result of influence by extraneous factors. This complexity is represented by the greater number of distinct zones of human activity. If the basic model (Fig.1) is a three-tiered one (hunting grounds, farmland, town) in which moving from the extremities to the centre is at the same time a progression from the domain of nature to the domain of culture, the present model distinguishes as many as six zones in which the extremities (circles A and E in Fig.2) no longer represent the opposing poles of a simple nature/culture contrast.

### 2.21 Town and periphery

Moving from the centre of Iganna town (A in Fig.2) towards periphery B, one notices that most new developments have been taking place within and around the area where the town walls once stood. In recent years a number of people, especially migrants residing in Lagos and Ibadan, started acquiring plots of land and building new houses, most of them in the direction of major urban areas (along the newly-tarred Okeho road - see Map 3)<sup>7</sup>. But long before this started happening the outskirts of the town had already become the focal points of missionary activity and school education. Although some mission schools did appear in the centres of old Yoruba towns, the bulk of the modern institutions of learning in Yorubaland developed on the



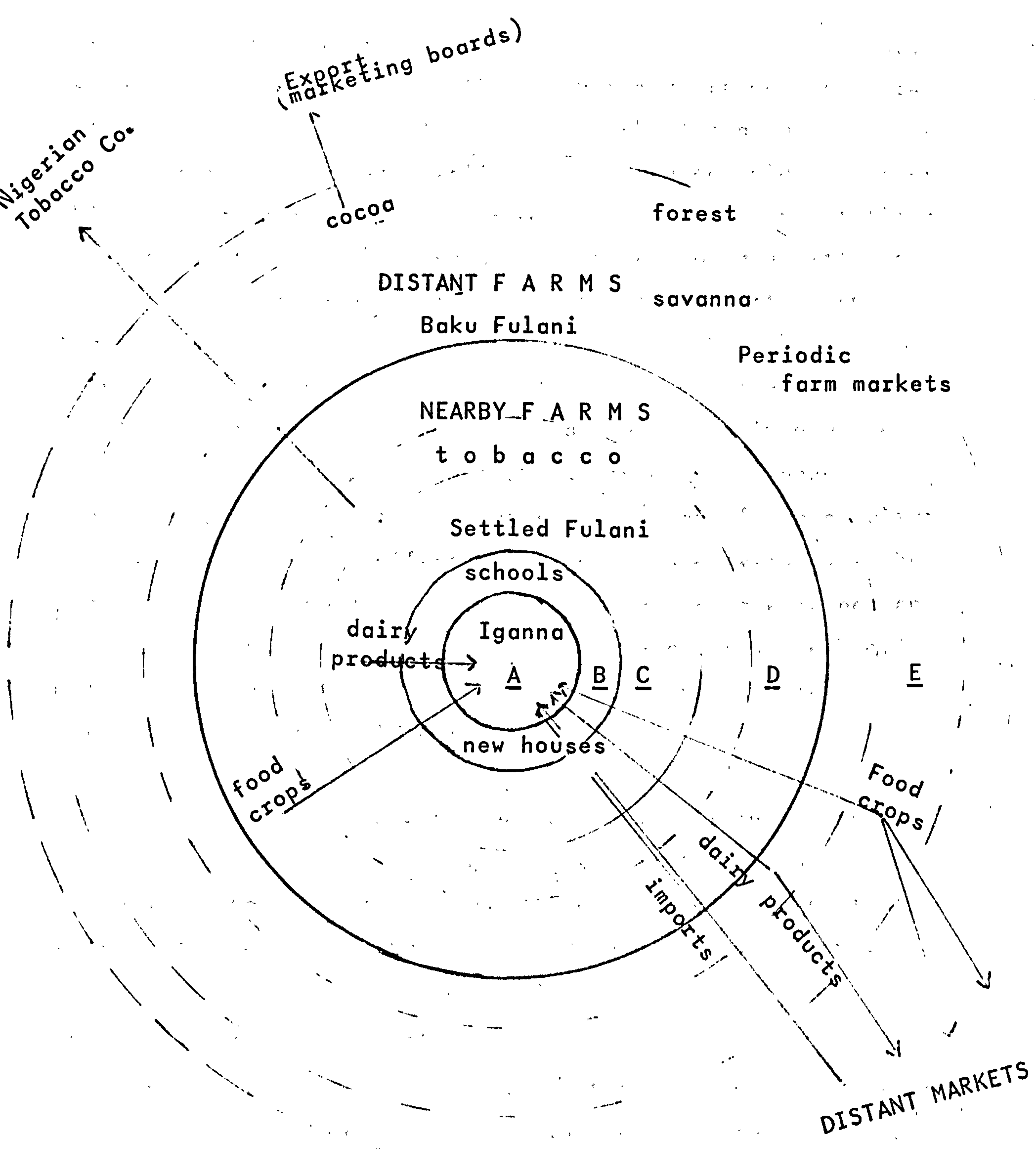


Figure 2. Present-day multi-focus model of Iganna

periphery of the existing towns and villages. This tendency is obvious in Iganna, where the four primary schools are located just outside the old town. No doubt the areas of unused land near the former town walls were convenient places for establishing schools, but it is also true that as institutions of learning the schools have so far proved to have little or no relevance for farming, hunting, trading and artisanship traditions in Iganna. Although this may not have been the intention of the early advocates of education, there is little doubt that the schools have served above all as intermediary agencies in precipitating the emigration of young people to the cities. Thus the schools constitute foci of socio-cultural life which not only manifest their irrelevance vis-à-vis the traditional focus of human activities (that is, the palace and the market and the institutions these stood for - see Fig.1), but also threaten the monopoly of the attentions which the traditional centre would otherwise enjoy.

Consequently the people who have been moving into the peripheral zones (either to build new houses, or to attend school) are also those whose main interests are focused on the urban centres (as actual or potential migrants) rather than on Iganna town.

## 2.22 The traditional cattle zone

The settlements of Fulani herders in the towns of northwestern Yorubaland have a long history behind them. Already in 1830 the Lander brothers made mention of "Falatah" (Fulani) villages which they passed on their journey to the Niger (1834:126, *passim*). In Iganna today there are as many as seven Fulani compounds in the immediate vicinity of the town. According to many accounts which I recorded, these Fulani groups trace their history in Iganna back to well before the Dahomean war of the early 1880s.



Though the settled Fulani have always lived a rather marginal life in Iganna, structurally their presence has been well assimilated into the traditional social system. While continuing to enjoy a semi-independent existence, officially they placed themselves under the authority of the Sabiganna and his town chiefs. Although they are a loosely structured, cattle-owning family groups, they nevertheless accord a certain authority to one of their senior men whom they elect as headman. In conformity with the prevailing Yoruba model of authority structures, this headman is referred to as bale.

The settled Fulani live almost exclusively off their herds. The men look after the cattle and transact the transfers or sales of cattle, while the women deal with the processing of dairy products. With the money they earn from marketing these products they buy food and other commodities from Iganna market people. Some of the cattle in the Fulani herds may be owned by the Sabiganna, by a chief or even by commoners. For a Yorubaman to own a cow which is looked after by the Fulani is an investment. Calves born to the cow belong alternately to the Fulani and to the owner. A man may also decide to sell a cow when he is in need of money.

The cattle tended by the settled Fulani is commonly referred to as "dwarf cattle" (Forde 1969:6). During the day the young Fulani men take the herds out for grazing in the immediate vicinity of the town. As most of the land in that area is not cultivated, the herds are well out of reach of the farms which lie further afield, so that damage to crops is minimal. Though no fixed boundaries exist to partition grazing land from cultivated land, the traditional cattle zone in Iganna stretches out on average from about one to two miles from the town. In figure 2 this zone corresponds to circle C. Unlike the second

circle (B) which is strongly city-oriented, zone C is, structurally, closely focused on Iganna. This is so because the Fulani are generally well-integrated into the host society. Apart from the Fulbe dialect which they speak amongst themselves, they are all fluent in Yoruba. Even individual bonds of friendship between Yoruba and Fulani men are not uncommon in Iganna, although no marriages take place between the two ethnic groups.

The killing of livestock traditionally took place only in festive and ritual contexts (such as receiving visitors, funerals, marriages and sacrifices to the orisa). On such occasions goats or sheep would be killed (these are kept by Yoruba women). On more important occasions, however, cows may be bought for slaughter from the local Fulani. For ordinary everyday needs, the townspeople depended almost exclusively on game animals killed by the hunters. Nowadays, however, with the gradual depletion of wild life in the area, the need for cow meat has increased considerably. During the rainy season when hunting is reduced to a minimum, cows are slaughtered almost every day of the week in Iganna (These are usually the large zebu-type cattle raised by the more recently arrived nomadic Fulani, rather than settled Fulani cattle).

Consequently, when we compare the location of zone C in figure 2 with the basic single-focus model represented in figure 1, we notice that this cattle zone C introduces a greater complexity. However, functionally the overall balance of the model is not upset, as the settled Fulani are well-integrated into the Iganna society for which they produce commodities (dairy products and occasional meat) which are mainly transacted and consumed locally. In other words, structurally zone C is also predominantly Iganna town centred.



## 2.23 The nearby farms

In my discussion of the farming district around Iganna I shall distinguish between the small scattered farms close to the town and the bigger, more distant farms. Though the two areas tend to shade into each other, they are nevertheless distinct in a number of ways which I shall now go on to analyse.

The nearby farms are located at distances of one to three miles from Iganna town. This area was intensively farmed in the old days, especially during the last century when the dangers of war and abduction kept people within close range of the town. Because of its proximity to the town and its accessibility to successive generations of people searching for firewood, most of the area is open and largely depleted of heavy trees.

The farms in this zone are cultivated exclusively by Iganna natives. As they are small and usually not further away from the town than half or an hour's walk, permanent farmsteads are not found in this area. People farming in this zone are either too old to trek further afield, or have businesses in the town that do not allow them to reside in distant farms for many days on end. Senior chiefs who have to attend to town matters almost every day of the week fall in this category, as well as artisans (tailors, carpenters, weavers and cycle repairers) whose clientele is irregular and they are therefore forced to make up their earnings by at least some part-time farming.

Farms in this area are small by contemporary standards. The total number of plots one man may farm usually covers an area between one and two acres. In most cases crop production is not much in excess of the food requirements of the farmers and their household dependants; consequently it is not the full-time

farmer set on cashcrop production who moves into this area.

Tobacco farming is also concentrated in this zone of nearby farms. When the Nigerian Tobacco Company first introduced the crop, individual farmers were encouraged to grow tobacco and sell the leaves to their local cooperative which acted as an intermediary agency between the farmers and the Company; but distrust among the farmers and corrupt practices by the cooperative employees eventually led to the decline of the local tobacco industry, and many frustrated farmers stopped growing tobacco. In the 60s, however, the Company started a new scheme, scrapping the old cooperatives and making loans available to individual farmers to build their own curing barns and sell their crop directly to the Company. This new scheme met with enthusiasm in some towns in the area, but not in Iganna. In 1975 there were only half a dozen tobacco farmers left in Iganna, while Itasa, with a population of only 3000, had as many as eighteen.

Though tobacco farming requires very hard work, its undoubted profitability is enticing for many farmers. With hard work and careful planning based on advice from Company experts, some farmers in the Iganna area have earned enough to be able to build new houses, or to send their children to secondary schools. One farmer even managed to pay the fees for three of his sons, two of whom were at grammar school and the third at university.

In view of this, the tendency of outsiders is to explain the lack of popularity of the crop in the area in terms of the Igannans' supposed inborn laziness. My inclination is to view this as another example of Igannans' conservatism in the face of innovation and change. Later on in this study I shall



try to account for these conservative tendencies in Iganna by considering the specific socio-historical constraints in the area. At this stage of the analysis, however, I can only state the fact that, although tobacco farming in Iganna can be profitable, local farmers show little interest in the crop. Thus the assumption that people emigrate from the rural areas because there is no money in farming suffers another setback. Although it is possible that the Nigerian Tobacco Company may eventually restrict the amount of tobacco farming in the area, there is much room for expansion in Iganna now; yet farmers are not forthcoming in applying for loans from the Company.

Within the complex multi-focus model represented by figure 2, the zone of the nearby farms corresponds to circle D. Apart from the small amount of tobacco farming which takes place there, and which is geared exclusively to the export trade, the bulk of the farming activities in zone D conform most closely to zone II in figure 1. This zone, it will be remembered, represented the traditional zone of cultivated land between the Yoruba town and the uncultivated forests and waste lands which lie beyond.

#### 2.24 The distant farms

If the zone of nearby farms was characterised by small scattered farmplots, with production geared almost entirely to household consumption, the large farming district which extends far beyond it is above all the area where present-day commercial farming takes place. In this area the farmers have built permanent farmsteads, and in some places even entire hamlets have developed. This is also where, in the last few decades, a ring of periodic markets for channelling cashcrops to the distant urban markets was established. Together with this increase in the production of foodcrops for the urban markets and cocoa for

export overseas, there has also been a great deal of immigration into the area by non-native Yoruba farmers, by seasonal labourers from outside Yorubaland, and more recently by new groups of Fulani pastoralists. Before discussing the impact of the non-native farmers on the development of commercial farming in the area, I shall first look at the more problematic position of the newly arrived Fulani.

#### 2.241 The Baku Fulani

The first group of nomadic Fulani herders settled in Iganna around 1967. By 1974-5 I could count about half a dozen groups of these immigrants in the area. Although ethnically the newly arrived herders may all be classified as Fulani, people in the Iganna area (both Yoruba and settled Fulani) do not call them this; instead they refer to them as Baku, which is a locally coined name of unknown meaning and origin. I shall use the same term throughout this study in order to differentiate this category from the settled Fulani.

Culturally, the Baku differ in many ways from the settled Fulani. Whereas the latter live in long rectangular houses, similar to those of their Yoruba hosts, the former construct temporary huts of the circular pattern which is very common in northern Nigeria, both among the Fulani and many of the sedentary tribes (Nupe, Gwari, Gwandara, Tiv and Mada). Also, the Baku cattle belongs to the large zebu-type and is markedly different from the dwarf cattle of the settled Fulani.

Whereas the settled Fulani stay out of the farming zone by sticking to the unoccupied land near the town, the Baku have established their camps at distances of three to six miles from the town, which is right in the middle of the savannah farming zone. The uncultivated land in that area is still extensive,



and its general carrying capacity might well be sufficient to provide pastures for the Baku herds. In practice, however, the cattle frequently stray into the scattered farms, trampling and eating the crops. Even the revitalisation of land that lies fallow can be seriously jeopardised if the grass that grows on it is continuously being eaten by cattle.

This new situation has led to a lot of friction between the Yoruba farmers and the Baku Fulani; but if the situation was unprecedented for the Yoruba farmers, it was certainly not too unfamiliar to the Baku, who in the course of their nomadic peregrinations are always faced with the problem of finding pastures in the tribal territories of various West African agriculturalists. In order to establish such pastures in Iganna the Baku have been deploying a variety of strategies, ranging from submissive begging for grazing land from the local chiefs to boldly settling down in a particular area, even in the face of strong opposition by the local people. In their dealings with individual farmers who objected to finding straying cattle in their farms the Baku have on many occasions reacted with threats and intimidation, sometimes even beating farmers up. On other occasions when farmers tried to take legal action, either in the customary court or with the police, they succeeded in obtaining some compensation for the damage to their crops; but more often the Baku would bribe their way out of the litigations, as they usually have more cash than the farmers. In these procedures the Baku can usually depend on the strong support of the handful of Iganna cattle traders who act as middlemen between them and the local butchers.

Obviously the position of the chiefs in these matters is usually highly ambiguous. When they first allowed the Baku to establish a camp in the area they were given some rewards in cash and in

heads of cattle, as well as assurances that the herds would be well looked after so that no damage would be done to the crops of local farmers. But once the Baku were settled and were joined by some of their fellow pastoralists and their herds, disputes became rife between them and the farmers whose crops suffered, inspite of the early promises. The chiefs soon found themselves faced with conflicting loyalties: financially a chief may find it advantageous to give the Baku grazing rights on his land, but because of the inevitable frictions with the farmers the chief is also likely to become increasingly unpopular with his own people. In Iganna only the chief of Aiyede's quarter and the Sabiganna himself have so far given grazing rights to the Baku; hence the new cattle camps are found only in the northwestern and southeastern farming sectors (see Map 4). Though there have been repeated attempts by the Baku to settle on Ikia's land, farmers in the area and the people of Ikia's quarter in Iganna have, from the start, successfully pressurised their ageing chief to keep the Baku off their land.

The damage a herd of cattle can do to a plot of maize or any other crop by straying even for only half an hour is no small matter for farmers whose livelihood depends entirely on their crops. Some farmers who used to farm on Aiyede's land have left Iganna since the arrival of the Baku, while others have started new farms further away in the bush where the cattle have not as yet penetrated. If the Baku succeed in settling more permanently in Iganna (which is quite feasible) it is likely that eventually new exclusive grazing zones will be established which will reduce the farming zones while pushing their limits further away from the town. Such a process would inevitably precipitate the emigration of yet more farmers to the cities.



Most of the cattle slaughtered in Iganna is nowadays bought from the local Baku. Hence the paradoxical situation arises in which the Baku outdo the traditional hunters in providing fresh meat for the same people whose livelihood as agriculturalists they continuously threaten.

Structurally, the Baku in the Iganna area are primarily linked to Iganna town, to the king and chiefs whose hospitality they enjoy, and to the people in general in so far as they provide them with fresh meat. At the same time, however, they also have some foci of interest outside Iganna. Some of their cattle, for instance, is sold to traders outside Iganna, and eventually herded along the cattle routes supplying the more densely populated urban centres of southwestern Nigeria. Of importance also, especially for the women, is the long distance trade in cheese between Iganna and the cities of Ibadan and Lagos. The middle trade in this commodity, however, is almost entirely in the hands of Yoruba women from these cities who travel twice or three times a week to Iganna to buy the cheese from the Fulani women. A few Iganna women also take part in this trade, buying the cheese from the Baku camps in the bush and selling it in the town to the long distance traders.

The structural position of the Baku Fulani as represented in figure 2 is clearly located in zone E, which is the zone of the distant savannah farms. As pastoralists, the Baku's primary focus of allegiance is to the local king or chief, as well as to the Iganna cattle traders and butchers whom they provision with meat. However, as providers of meat and especially as manufacturers of cheese, their production is also geared to the urban centres, even though they leave the trade in these commodities to outsiders.

## 2.242 Farm settlements

In the distant Iganna farms native and immigrant farmers live and cultivate their plots side by side. Relations between them are on the whole good, though at closer analysis one notices a number of significant features distinguishing the two groups. In the following I shall discuss these differences while showing, at the same time, that it is the non-native farmers whose outputs and money returns on cashcropping are greatest.

The more traditional farmsteads in this part of Yorubaland are crudely built longhouses with low thatched roofs supported by upright forked poles dug into the ground. In between the poles stand low mud walls three to four feet high. Similar walls are built inside the hut and serve as rudimentary partitions between the sleeping quarters and the cooking hearths.

The most common types of constructions in the area are slightly more elaborate than these, having roofs actually resting on proper mud walls which may be about six feet high. In more recent years, however, some people have started building farmsteads that are no different from the ordinary houses currently found in Yoruba towns (though different from the traditional town compound). These houses are about eight feet high, have mud walls and even windows with shutters and doors with locks, so that the entire house may be locked up. Most conspicuous of all are the corrugated iron sheets roofing the houses. These more sophisticated and costly dwellings are to be found mainly in the southwestern farming sector of Iganna, in places like Temidire, Elekōkan, Tudi and Inamere, and almost all of them were built by immigrant farmers. Igannans themselves continue to build their farmsteads in the traditional way, completely overshadowed by the more prestigious houses of their immigrant



neighbours.

Unlike the nearby farming zone (D in Fig.2) where individual farms are scattered over the plains, the distant farming zone (E) is characterised by scattered clusters of farmsteads surrounded by tracts of cultivated land in the bush, which in these parts is generally wooded. In this way the traditional waste land and forest areas (zone III in Fig.1) have now been pushed further back or have disappeared altogether. The sizes of these farm settlements vary greatly, from one or a few huts to more than fifty. The larger settlements are modern developments, typical of the southwestern sector where the influx of immigrant farmers has been most intense.

Farm settlements are generally referred to as oko ("farm"), ibudo ("camp"), ago ("hut-tent"), or aba ("farm shack"). Other terms such as abule and ileto ("hamlet", "village"), are also sometimes used<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, each settlement has its proper name, as for instance Temidire, Aiyegun, Araromi and Olorunda. Some settlements still bear the names of towns which existed in the area until the nineteenth century wars, such as Tudi and ahoro ("ruins of") Agba. Other settlements are named after the first settler (e.g. "aba Samson" and "oko Adeniji"). Headmen of farm settlements are referred to and addressed as bale ("father of the land"). As it was the town and not the farm which constituted the traditional arena for politics in Yorubaland, the bale of a farm settlement did not have a specific political office in the town because of his headmanship. Even on the farm his political status is underplayed; he has no council of chiefs, and farmers may leave his settlement at will. His main responsibility is to maintain the peace in his settlement.

Headmanship in a farm settlement is given to the founder, or to the most senior man within the local group of his descendants. The founder may originally have obtained permission to cultivate the land from the king or chief who held exclusive rights in the area; but once the settlement is established, it is largely up to the founder and his successors to let in other farmers. Thus settlements often include, apart from members of the founder's descent group, a number of affines, sisters' sons, or just ordinary friends (and nowadays increasingly even strangers). On the other hand, members of a founder's descent group will often be found farming on different settlements. Since options in choosing a friendly settlement or a good farming area are open, it cannot be assumed that people who farm in the same settlement are necessarily relatives living in the same compound in Iganna.

As headmanship of a farm settlement is largely a matter of ascribed status, it is not necessarily the most progressive or prosperous farmer who is the bale. This point is striking in places such as Tudi and Elekōkan, where many non-native farmers are successful cocoa planters living in spacious farmsteads, while the bale are old Iganna men living in small thatched roof huts.

Tribute is no longer paid by farmers, but when the bale of the settlement is giving a feast in Iganna (for his ancestral orisa, or at the occasion of a funeral), it is customary to make a contribution in kind, for instance of yams, or a basket of cassava meal. The bale, however, cannot demand corvée labour from those to whom he gives the right to farm on his land. In fact, farmers who live together on the same settlement all cultivate their plots independently of each other. It is not only the bale who has to manage the work on his farm by himself these



days; elders in general no longer receive the assistance their sons used to give them in the old days. Moreover, the traditional forms of reciprocal aid among groups of farmers in the form of rotating working parties (aaro, owe) are no longer practised, so that each farmer, young or old, chief or commoner, is faced with the prospect of having to till his land on his own.

There is, however, another source of labour available to farmers wishing to increase their crop production: that of the agatu. These are seasonal migrants of various Benin and Nigerian ethnic backgrounds who in recent years have been moving around the farming districts of Yorubaland. Though the proper Yoruba term for farm labourer is alaagbaro (or alaagbase), non-Yoruba labourers are commonly referred to as agatu (meaning and origin not known)<sup>9</sup>. This shall be the term that I will also use for them throughout this study.

## 2.243 Cashcropping and the agatu or non-Yoruba farm labourers

The main points to be stressed about the agatu in Iganna are, firstly, their essential role in the production of cashcrops, and, secondly, the fact that the demand which attracts them to the area and keeps them there comes, not so much from the indigenous farmers, but from the immigrant Yoruba farmers.

Agatu are hired mainly for clearing new plots in the bush. When crops have been harvested and the same plots must be cleared for planting a later crop before the end of the rainy season, the agatu may be called upon again. Finally, the agatu may be hired for weeding while the crops are maturing. The actual planting and harvesting of the crops, however, is done by the farmers themselves. At harvest time Yoruba women usually help the men by gathering the crops and transporting

them to the house or to the market.

On arrival in the Iganna area in the beginning of the year, the agatu usually lodge in the house of one of the local farmers. Although this farmer is referred to as baale ("father of the house", here "landlord"), he is paid no rent by his guests, for whom he also acts as a witness to the job contracts which they make with local farmers. The presence of a witness to such deals is important, as actual payments are often delayed until the October harvest, when most agatu are about to return to their places of origin. In return for this hospitality and services, the agatu do a few days' work on the landlord's farm free of charge.

From data I collected on a number of landlords it seems that the agatu tend to stay with men who are respected in the local community for their personal qualities (as friendliness and impartiality when arbitrating in disputes) rather than because of their affluence or power, or even their town of origin (in fact there were almost as many non-natives as natives among the landlords in the farm settlements). Hence it would be wrong to assume that it is inevitably the headman (bale) or the biggest farmer in a settlement who acts as host to the migrant labourers. Although the position gives a man a certain prestige in the community, as well as some free service on his farm, these advantages do not seem to outweigh much the disadvantages of the responsibilities such landlords have to shoulder. Hence in practice there is little competition among local farmers to become agatu landlords.

As it is ultimately the agatu themselves who decide where they want to stay, it would seem more important for the purposes of this study to investigate in which settlements they tend to



reside, rather than with which landlord they put up. Though it was not possible to make a census of the agatu who were staying in the Iganna area, from my personal observations and from information which I obtained from the people I could establish that the largest number of migrant labourers tend to concentrate on the farming district that lies southwest of Iganna town (in Temidire, Elekōkan, Tudi and Ofegun). As this is also the area with the greatest influx of non-native farmers, my initial assumption was that these farmers probably made more use of the agatu's services than native ones. Subsequent investigations showed this assumption to be correct, for the following two reasons.

First, most of the agatu are young men who left their tribal areas for reasons very similar to those which drive young Iganans to the cities: the quest for money. But whereas the latter rush to the urban centres where candidates outnumber jobs, the agatu move into the labour-drained agricultural areas, choosing those areas where demand for labour is greatest.

In some of the farm settlements southeast and northwest of Iganna town, where most of the farmers I met were natives living in simple thatched roof farmsteads, I noticed some round, run-down huts, to all appearances no longer used. When I expressed surprise at finding this type of hut (typical of Northern Nigeria) in the middle of a Yoruba settlement, I was told that they used to be occupied by the agatu; for some years now, however, these agatu had stopped coming to the settlement, going instead to either Iganna town or to the southwestern farming zone. Thus, whenever the farmers here needed the agatu they had to go and look for them in their new abodes.

To some extent this move by the agatu can be explained in terms

of their desire to live in more densely populated and therefore more lively settlements, where they can put up in comfortable houses rather than primitive huts. (Indeed, the tastes and living standards of migrant labourers, like those of most Nigerians, are rapidly becoming more and more sophisticated). Nevertheless, from various enquiries and interviews with agatu it was made clear to me that decisions about which farm settlement to go to were determined primarily by the intensity and regularity of work opportunities that local farmers could offer.

More recently, in the southwestern farming district where labourers are most in demand, experienced agatu would sometimes recruit young labourers in their villages of origin and set themselves up in Yoruba settlements as labour contractors, arranging jobs with local farmers and sending their young recruits to carry them out. This system was practised in Iganna mainly by the natives of the Middle-belt area; other labourers generally carried out their job contracts alone. Unlike the more settled agatu bosses, the freelance, self-employed migrant labourers were often very mobile; those based with landlords in Iganna town would sometimes trek to distant farms and work there for some time before moving to other settlements where there was demand for their services.

The last observation brings me to the second reason why non-native farmers are more likely to use the agatu's services. Individual farmers' needs for labour depend primarily on the size of their farms, and this in turn is directly related to the amount of cashcropping they do. Most Iganna farmers in the distant farming zone (E in Fig.2) called on the agatu very occasionally, sometimes only once every few years when they were shifting their farms to new sites in the bush. Average farm



sizes in this area generally did not exceed three to four acres, and once the plots had been made most farmers managed reasonably well with the day to day work. Few Iganna farmers made bigger farms which required the more frequent outside labour provided by the agatu.

Some immigrant farmers, however, especially in the southwestern sector of the distant farming zone, made considerably larger farms; they were the first to develop the forest tracts for cocoa, and most of the plantations in that area were owned by them. They also provided most work for the agatu; the fact that agatu labour is so highly organised in the southwestern sector (see previous page) is a direct result of the greater farming exploits of the non-native farmers. No doubt Iganna farmers have also taken advantage of the availability of agatu labour; some, however, employed the agatu for reasons of prestige, or in order to have more free time themselves. Thus in 1974-5, when a sudden shortage of migrant labourers from northern Nigeria forced many farmers in the southwestern sector to plant less, these Iganna farmers confessed candidly that the shortage simply meant that they would have to work harder themselves.

Finally, the establishment in the distant farming zone of farm markets whose primary function is to channel farm produce to the urban centres is a modern development also to be found in areas where immigrant farmers and agatu are most numerous. I shall discuss this point under a separate heading in the following paragraphs.

#### 2.244 Farm markets

Whereas the basic single-focus model of the traditional Yoruba town is characterised by a market located in its centre (both

geographically and in terms of socio-economic organisation - see Fig.1), the present-day multi focus Iganna model, while retaining this central market (zone A in Fig.2), is characterised further by a number of additional markets in the distant farming zone (E in Fig.2). These zone E markets came into existence in the last few decades, and serve mainly as centres for bulking farm produce for the distant urban markets.

In the light of a number of recent studies on Yoruba markets, I shall first try to describe the Iganna markets and locate their position and significance within the expanding present-day market systems. Secondly I shall argue that, as modern centres of entrepreneurial activity, most farm markets in the Iganna area owe their existence to the impetus from non-native farmers and traders. As far as trading activities are concerned, I shall stress the important role played by the women in carrying out the middle trade in farm produce.

## 2.2441 Market rings and central-place theory

Recent studies (e.g. Hodder 1969; Sudarkasa 1973; Trager 1973) on the spatial distribution of markets in Yorubaland and the flow of produce through them have shown how rural markets function mainly as places for bulking farm produce, while other markets in more central urban areas function primarily as redistributive centres for the urban consumers locally and further afield. Focusing on the rural periodic markets, Hodder has described how several markets within a particular area usually constitute what he calls a "market ring". By this he means a system whereby all the markets which form part of a ring operate on successive days. In this way traders who commute between the markets and the urban centres which they supply can attend all the markets in rotation. However, no market ring is wholly self-contained: rather, adjacent market rings impinge on one



another, "resulting in a loose chain-mail pattern of rings stretching over most of Yorubaland" (1969:66,7).

In her case study of Yoruba women's occupations in the town of Awe, Sudarkasa has also identified such market rings, stressing the point that rural markets "function primarily as 'feeder markets' for the towns. Although various kinds of trade take place in these markets they are primarily centres for the sale of agricultural products which are bulked and redistributed in the towns" (1973:51).

Focusing on Ilesà town as a major urban centre, and its hinterland (culturally and administratively referred to as Ijesaland), Trager has recently examined the extent to which models from central-place theory can be applied to the marketing system in that area. Referring to certain fundamental criteria of central-place systems, Trager cogently argues that the market places in Ijesaland comprise a hierarchical system (1976:60ff). First she points to the multiple trade links between Ilesà and the periodic markets of Ijesaland as indicating the existence of a system in which Ilesà town acts as a major centre for the redistribution of imported commodities which are traded in the area, while the rings of periodic rural markets function as primary sources for the supply of farm produce in Ilesà town and Ijesaland at large. Secondly, in her examination of whether the system is hierarchical, she concludes that the twenty-eight markets in the area under study could be ranked into five groups according to their relative centrality vis-à-vis one another and in relation to the highest order market within the system - that of Ilesà town itself (ibid:87). Moreover, this hierarchical structuring is to a large extent also reflected in the topographical pattern which is formed by transport routes linking the different centres (ibid:88). Consequently the

author suggests that "although there are a number of market places in Ijesaland which are located around Ilesa the spatial organisation of those market places is closer to the central-place model called a transport system than to that of a solar system" (ibid:254).

Though no actual marketing system on the ground could be expected to correspond exactly to one of these models, the close affinity of the Ijesa system with the "transport system" which Trager identified would seem plausible when we take into account that most of the periodic markets throughout Yorubaland are relatively recent developments, appearing and linking up with each other in a rather piecemeal fashion in response to the growing dependence of urban centres on farm produce from the hinterland on the one hand, and the dependence of the rural areas on imported commodities on the other.

These observations, finally, are also consistent with the fact that, as in the case of the Ijesa markets, none of these systems is wholly self-contained. Thus the centrality of Ilesa town in Ijesaland does not preclude other major competing centres such as Osogbo and Ibadan from making inroads into the Ijesa marketing system, as indeed happens (ibid:77, passim). Consequently, the commodities traded in the markets may have a restricted level of circulation within the geographical boundaries of the system; but at the same time goods can and actually do move across these boundaries and thus enter into adjacent or even distant marketing systems.

The central-place theory tested by Trager for the Ijesaland markets deserves further testing in other parts of Yorubaland. Comparing such studies would elucidate how major competing centres such as Ilesa, Osogbo, Ibadan and others relate to one

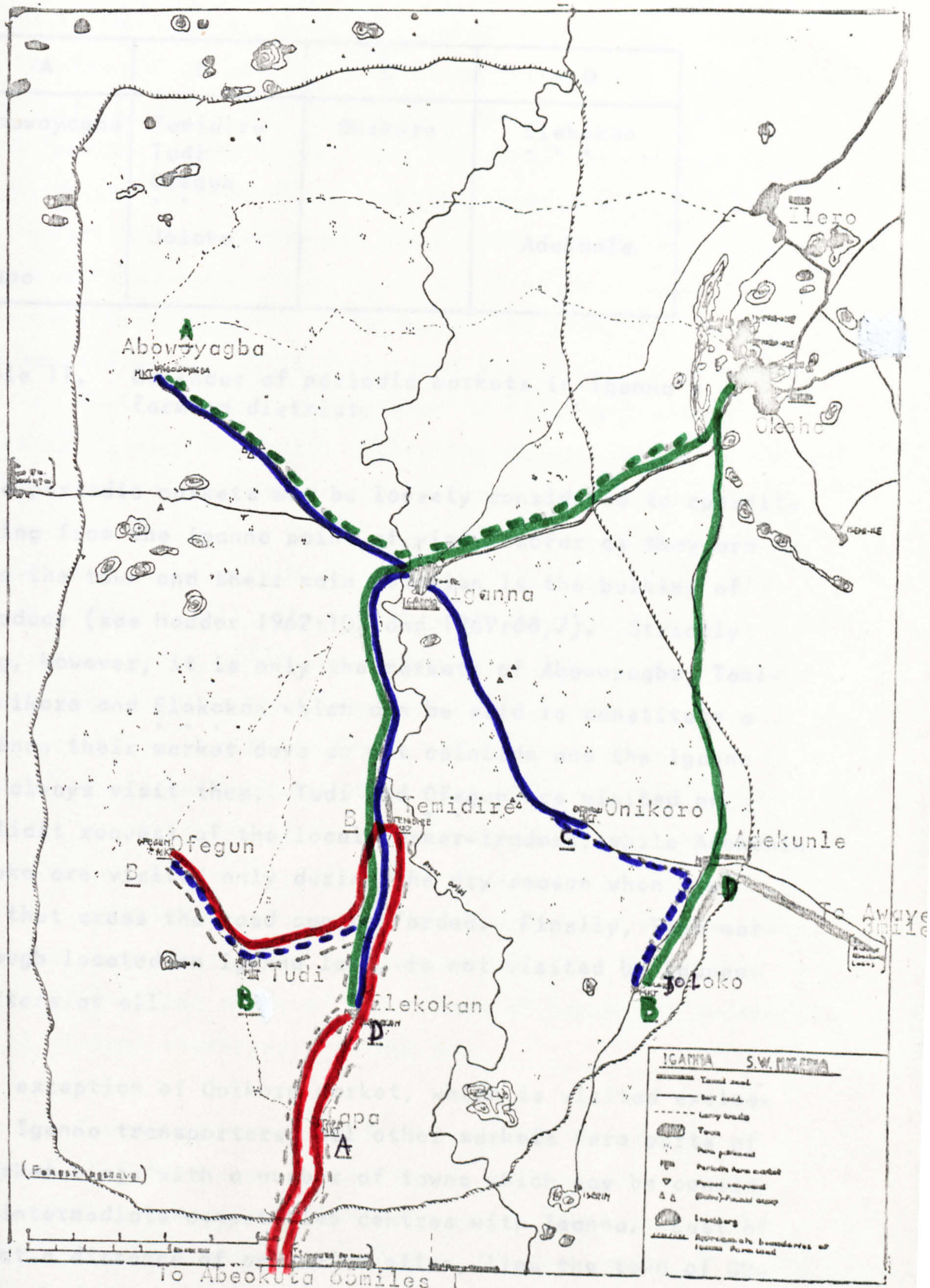


another, what kind of hierarchies can be found among them, how their hinterlands interlock. The Iganna area, as a bulking market of farm produce for higher level urban markets, must be included simultaneously in the hinterlands of at least three major competitive centres: Abeokuta, Ibadan and Lagos. The relative self-containedness of the Ijesa rural markets (as identified by Trager), all lying within a short radius of twenty-five miles along or near roads converging on the centre of Ilesha town, is certainly not found here; Iganna markets divide their allegiance between several major centres.

At one level Iganna town is still, as in the old days (see Fig.1), a centre towards which the flow of crops which are produced in its hinterland is directed. Often crops are conveyed directly from the farms to the household consumers, unless they are channelled through the local markets. As far as long distance trade is concerned, however, Iganna town functions mainly as an intermediary centre between the outlying farm markets and the distant urban markets. This means that large quantities of cashcrops which are traded in the outlying markets are first conveyed to Iganna, where they may be traded again to other middlemen, or else be further bulked until they are transported to the distant urban markets.

The nine farm markets (see Map 4) located in what I have termed the distant farming zone of Iganna (E in Fig.2) are all periodic day-markets which are held every four days (or in Yoruba reckoning "five-day" markets, as Yoruba speakers calculate from the day on which the market is held up to and including the subsequent market day). The order in which these markets rotate is shown in table 11. If, for example, day A on which the markets of Abowoyagba and Tapa are held falls on a Sunday, the next market day in these places would be the following Thursday.





Lorry routes: regular/irregul.

Iganna lorries	Red solid line
Abeokuta	Blue solid line
Okeho	Green solid line
Awaye	Blue dashed line
Other	Red dashed line

Map 4 Iganna periodic farm markets



A	B	C	D
Abowoyagba	Temidire Tudi Ofegun • • Joloko	Onikoro	Elekōkan • • •  Adekunle
Tapa			

Table 11. Calender of periodic markets in Iganna's farming district.

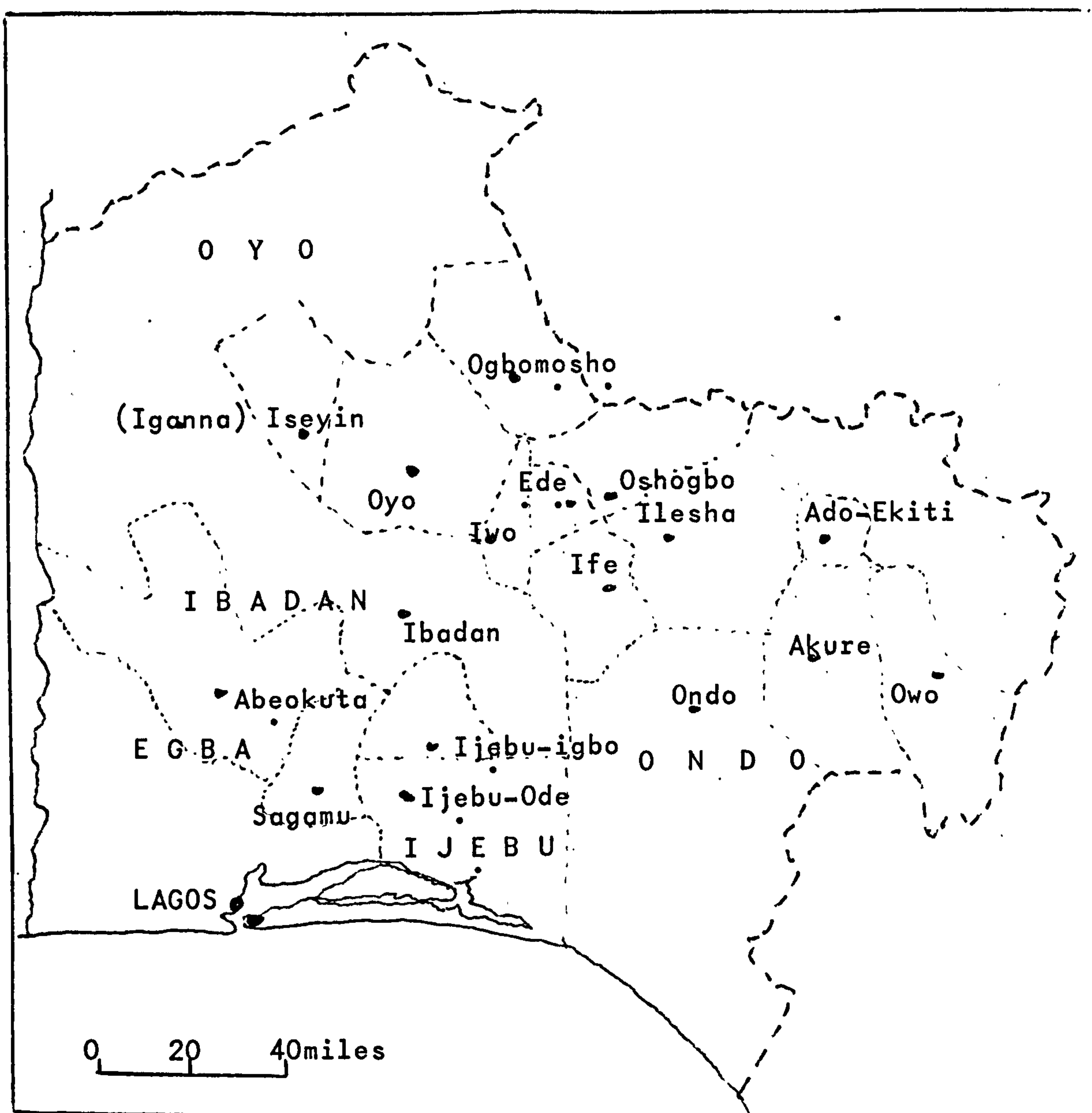
The nine periodic markets may be loosely considered to constitute a ring from the Iganna point of view insofar as they are close to the town and their main function is the bulking of farm produce (see Hodder 1962:107 and 1969:66,7). Strictly speaking, however, it is only the markets of Abowoyagba, Temidire, Onikoro and Elekōkan which can be said to constitute a ring, since their market days do not coincide and the Iganna lorries always visit them. Tudi and Ofegun are visited on the explicit request of the local farmer-traders, while Adekunle and Joloko are visited only during the dry season when the streams that cross the road can be forded. Finally, Tapa market, though located on Iganna land, is not visited by Iganna transporters at all.

With the exception of Onikoro market, which is visited exclusively by Iganna transporters, all other markets form parts of other market rings with a number of towns which may be considered as intermediate competitive centres with Iganna. East of Iganna, at a distance of only nine miles, lies the town of Okeho, from where regular transport is provided to the markets of Elekōkan, Adekunle and Joloko. Occasionally Okeho lorries also go to the market of Abowoyagba. Fifteen miles southeast of Iganna is the town of Awaiye, from where regular transport is

organised to the markets of Joloko and Adekunle. The markets in the farming sector southwest of Iganna town are also part of market rings which operate from a number of small towns south of Iganna. Among these, Tapa, Igboora, Lanlate and Irua also send lorries to the Iganna markets occasionally; but most of the transport that visits the farm markets southwest of Iganna town regularly comes directly from the major central city of Abeokuta (65 miles south of Iganna). The irregularity of the transport from the small towns just listed can be explained by the fact that their main allegiance as bulking places of farm produce is with Abeokuta. Hence the direct transport between Abeokuta and the Iganna markets makes the storing of farm produce en route less necessary. Farm produce from Iganna markets which is transported to Ibadan and to Lagos (via Ibadan), is, however, usually first bulked in intermediary towns such as Iganna, Okeho and Awaiye. Given the long distances (Iganna to Ibadan, 80 miles; Iganna to Lagos, 160 miles) and the layout of motor roads, the goods which move between Iganna and Ibadan/Lagos have to cross other central cities and their hinterlands, as for instance Iseyin and Oyo, and, further south, the Ijebu areas. A general, though in no way exact, overall view of the spatial distribution of the staple food supply sheds of the major urban centres of southwestern Nigeria is offered by Jones (1972) in his study of the nature of marketing systems in several African countries (see Map 5).

Although the Iganna area is largely self-sufficient as far as the production of foodcrops is concerned, most of the manufactured commodities come from Ibadan or Lagos. Abeokuta, on the other hand, is only a major central city for the export of farm produce from Iganna, supplying hardly any of the goods which are traded in the Iganna markets.





Map 5. Staple food supply sheds of the major urban centres of Western Nigeria according to Jones (see Jones 1972:89)

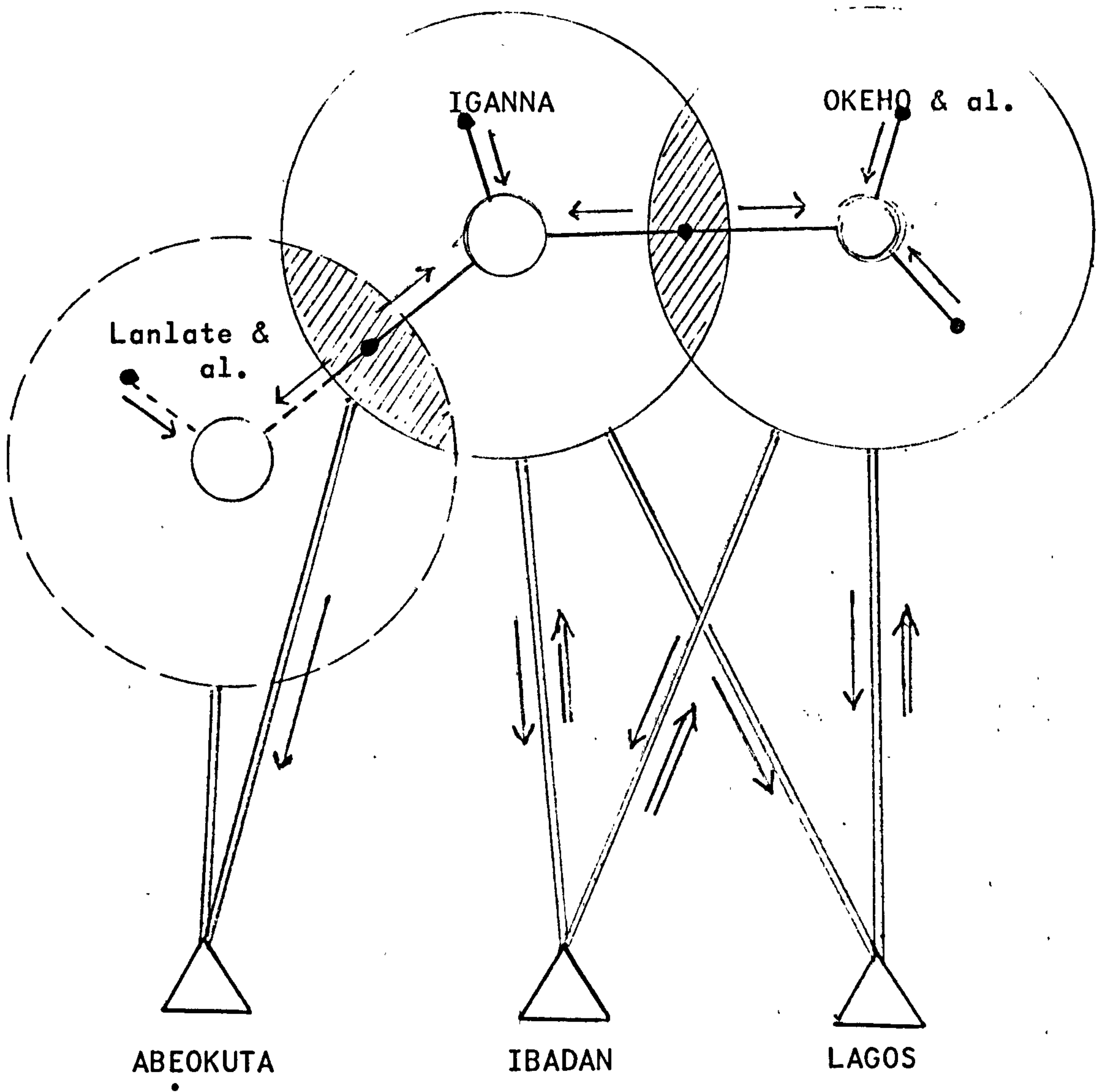
If central-place theory for marketing systems is applied to the Iganna markets, cognisance must be taken of the fact that in Iganna the hinterlands of at least three major central cities (Abeokuta, Ibadan and Lagos) impinge on one another. This complexity (not accounted for in Jones' study - see Map 5), which I have schematised in figure 3, would seem to make the Iganna situation to some extent different from the Ijesa model, in which most outlying markets have a dominant link of allegiance with Ilesà town only (at least as far as the flow of cashcrops and imported commodities is concerned - see Trager, *op.cit.*). The fact that Iganna farm markets channel farm produce to other rural towns such as Okeho and Lanlate means that the dispersal of allegiances operates also at the level of intermediary centres. Hence the shaded areas in figure 3, indicating the breakdown of the traditional self-containedness of rural towns. Interestingly, however, this local competition is located in the producing sectors of the farming zones, while rural towns in their totality (that is, the town centre plus surrounding farming zones) are being drawn into the orbits of competitive urban centres.

## 2.2442 Farm markets and immigrant farmers

So far I have stressed the point that cashcrop production in Iganna is directed mainly to three major urban centres, while at the local level large quantities of crops produced on Iganna land are directed to neighbouring towns, in particular to Okeho and Awaiye. The main reasons why the flow of farm produce takes this course must be sought in the way the trade is organised on the one hand, and in the individual town allegiances of the farmers and the traders on the other.

Iganna farmers, like the farmers of Okeho, Awaiye, and other neighbouring towns, are primarily producers of foodcrops grown





- Periodic farm market (ie feeder or bulking market)
- Intermediary competitive centre (ie rural "traditional" town)
- △ Major urban centre
- Direction of flow of farm produce
- ⇒ Direction of flow of manufactured and other consumer goods
- Line of allegiance between farm market and rural town
- == Line of allegiance between rural area and major urban centre

Figure 3. Central-place model of marketing system in Iganna

for their own consumption and that of their dependants on the farm and in the home. Their cashcrops, however, are sold either in the farm markets or in the hometown. In theory, a farmer can sell his crops to the highest bidder; thus an Iganna farmer who has taken his yams to Temidire market may sell them to an Abeokuta trader, if he offers a higher price than the local Iganna traders. In practice, however, things do not work out as simply as this. First, when farmers are not over-anxious to sell their crops at a particular time, they may prefer to wait until market prices go up later in the season. An Okeho farmer farming on Iganna land, for instance, may decide to take his crops to his hometown and keep them there until a later date when they fetch a better price. Secondly, farmers often incur debts, in which case they tend to borrow money from farm produce traders who are usually their trade partners hailing from the same town. In such cases it is customary for the farmer to pledge his crops to the trader, and for the trader to sell the crops and refund herself (it usually is a woman). Consequently, once a farmer has entered into a debt relationship his creditor/trader will decide about the further course along which the crops will flow.

On their part, the traders are also very much restricted in conducting their activities along established networks of trade contacts and markets. Traders from one town depend largely on their connections with their townspeople living elsewhere. Consequently, the women traders who control most of the middle trade in farm produce are usually natives of the same towns as the farmers they do business with. As a rule, Iganna women traders are based in Iganna town, although they may spend a good deal of their time attending the farm markets in the hinterlands, as well as the city markets in Ibadan and Lagos. This applies also to the Okeho and Awaiye traders, as



well as to other traders from the northwestern (Oyo) Yoruba towns in the area. Like the Iganna traders, Awaiye traders conduct their long distance trade mainly with Ibadan and Lagos. The trade with Abeokuta, on the other other hand, is too strongly dominated by the Egba themselves to allow sufficient scope for Iganna traders to establish themselves.

Having analysed the reasons why farm produce moves out of the Iganna area along the routes indicated, one may still wonder why the nine farm markets in the Iganna area are so unevenly distributed. North of Iganna town there is only one farm market, viz. Abowoyagba, while in the southwest there are five markets, and in the southeast another three. To some extent one might explain the abundance of farm markets in the areas south of the town by the larger numbers of farmers who are settled there, which in turn can be correlated with such environmental factors as soil fertility, the proximity of motorable roads and other market centres. Yet apart from these material factors, which no doubt influence decisions to establish periodic farm markets, ultimately the establishment and the development of any farm market is an entrepreneurial achievement. In this connection one must stress the importance of non-native farmers, especially from the Egba and Ibadan areas, in providing the impetus necessary. Joloko and Adekunle markets on the fringes of Iganna territory are in fact predominantly Okeho-Awaiye markets, as it is thanks to farmers and traders from these towns that they function. Abowoyagba, the only farm market north of Iganna, was founded around 1968 by a local farmer from Okeho, who has ever since remained personally in charge of the market, and is referred to as oloja, "owner of the market". The only market which is almost exclusively the achievement of Iganna

natives is Onikoro, a small market about six miles southeast of Iganna town.

The markets just listed are all located at crossroads in the bush, near small farm settlements usually consisting of a cluster of thatched huts. The markets themselves are simply open spaces in the bush. On market days the oloja and assisting elders sit in a hut on the edge of the open space and receive small levies from farmers who come to sell their crops to the traders that arrive in lorries from various towns. The levies which the oloja receives are also sold, and the proceeds (apart from a small amount sent on to the king and chiefs in Iganna) are used for the entertainment of visitors (extension officers from the Ministry of Agriculture, policemen, anthropologists etc.). No other activities are normally conducted in these markets.

The five markets in the southwestern sector, however, are all located in the centres of important farm settlements, some of which (such as Temidire, Tudi and Elekōkan) have already developed to the size of an entire village or small town. In Elekōkan a primary school was already under construction in 1974, as a result of community action. The driving force behind the rapid developments in these areas has come mainly from the large numbers of southern Yoruba farmers settled there, building their "pan-roofed" houses (houses with corrugated iron roofs) alongside the thatch-roofed huts of their Iganna hosts. Coming from Ibadan and Egba towns where commercial farming, and in particular the cultivation of cocoa, has had a long history, these southerners have shown a more progressive and entrepreneurial spirit than their northern Yoruba colleagues, and certainly their Iganna hosts.



The general layout of the farm markets in this southwestern farming sector is very similar to that of the central markets found in all Yoruba towns. Apart from farm produce bulking, one will find stalls where traders sell imported commodities or cooked foods, and barbers, tailors and other artisans are usually around to offer their services. This expansion, which includes the construction and maintenance of lorry tracks and culverts, has come about through the sheer effort of the local community, and it is doubtful that it would have happened had it been left to the Iganna farmers. At the other extreme, in the farming area north of Iganna town, the absence of markets is not due to the absence of farmers, or to a poor likelihood of producing cashcrops in large quantities; what is lacking is entrepreneurship of the kind exhibited by the immigrant farmers, and more particularly by the southern Yoruba elements among them.

In conclusion, two general points may be drawn from the preceding discussion. First, the dispersed allegiances observed in the Iganna farm markets (*vis-à-vis* both the markets of other towns in the area and the major urban centres) are coterminous with cleavages created by the town origin of the individual farmers and traders who regularly frequent the markets. Secondly, the presence or absence of periodic farm markets depends primarily on the entrepreneurial activities of the local people. In this respect it was clearly shown that the greatest concentration of farm markets is found in the areas where immigrant farmers are most numerous. Hence the shaded areas in figure 3, indicating competing rural town interests in Iganna land (that is, for the appropriation of farm produce) are also the areas where most farm markets are located. It was found, moreover, that among the immigrant farmers the Egba and Ibadan farmers in the southwestern farming sector were the most entrepreneurial

elements in the whole area.

## 2.2443 Women and the middle trade in farm produce

Unlike the middle trade in food crops which is run almost exclusively by women, the middle trade in cocoa is in the hands of men. Cocoa is geared entirely to overseas export. At the local level in the farms and markets it is the men who act as licensed buyers, buying from the farmers and selling to the agents of the State Marketing Board (Sudarkasa 1973:66; Beer 1976:9-10).

Sometimes farmers may take their cashcrops to the markets themselves, either in the hometown or in the distant urban centres, but mostly this task is left to the women traders who have more time and experience. Many Iganna women are involved in this middle trade, usually buying from the same Iganna farmers. Such dyadic trading relations, which often involve the pledging of crops in lieu of advance payments, are not normally entered into by married couples, even if the wives are traders in their own right.

While some women traders restrict their activities to Iganna town, others store crops in their houses in Iganna and wait for the appropriate time to sell them in Ibadan or Lagos, usually to Iganna traders settled there. On the whole foodcrops sell well in the cities, as demand for them is generally high; but good profits depend on various factors, such as the amount of capital a trader can work with, the choice of alternative markets, information about price fluctuation and wider trade contacts. The fact that the profit margins of most Iganna women traders are small compared to those of their Egba counterparts who visit the farm markets in the southwestern farming



sector suggests that the Egba women work with bigger trading capitals, as well as enjoying the advantages of selling and retailing their produce in the wider networks of markets and trade contacts of their own territory.

### 3. Conclusion

The analysis of the activities of the various categories of people living in the Iganna area has so far shown that structurally Iganna town is no longer the main focus of people's socio-cultural existence. The dispersal of people's foci in life away from Iganna is represented in an overall fashion in figure 2, and is shown more specifically for the domain of agricultural production in figure 3.

As far as the profitability of farming is concerned, it was clearly shown that, although the Iganna environment is well suited for agricultural production, it is the immigrant farmers who are most successful as cashcrop producers. Consequently, it would seem that by the criteria of formal economic rationality one cannot provide an adequate, satisfactory explanation for the fact that Igannans think that farming is unrewarding. Most of the profitable entrepreneurial activities are conducted by non-natives, as was exemplified by the exploits of the newly arrived Baku Fulani, of the agatu bosses with their farm labourers, and of many immigrant farmers. For a more adequate explanation of the claim that farming is unrewarding, especially for the native population, one must take into account the multiple human factors and constraints surrounding people's lives. What these constitute in Iganna will form the subject-matter of the second part of this thesis.

## NOTES

1. Iganna is  $8^{\circ}$  north and  $3^{\circ}15'$  east of Greenwich. The rock outcrop in the centre of the town is 750 feet high, from where the slopes over which the compounds are spread out come down to about 650 feet.
2. Source: Nigerian Tobacco Company weather station records, Iseyin.
3. The fact that town boundaries have not yet been established with great precision in many parts of Yorubaland is not surprising when we consider that traditionally large tracts of uncultivated bush or forest land constituted frontier zones between neighbouring kingdoms (Fadipe 1970:237). It is only in modern times, and often under the pressure of land shortage (not yet experienced in Iganna), that the exact delimitation of town boundaries becomes a matter of great importance. Hence in plotting a boundary of the Iganna farming district I hope only for approximation, basing myself on general information obtained from the local people. Likewise, in locating the boundaries between the land belonging to various lineages in Iganna (see Map 3), I in no way claim to present exact delimitations. My provisional, tentative plotting of such boundaries has no legal objectives, but only sociological ones related to the general argument pursued.
4. Oluwasanmi, however, also stressed that population density in the former Western Region of Nigeria is far from uniform; in contrast to the relatively low density in northwestern Yorubaland, Oshun Division had the greatest density, with 371 people per square mile (1966:77).
5. The "cocoa belt" of the former Western Region in Nigeria stretches out from Egbado in the west, through Ibadan and down to Owo in the east. As Beer points out, it was in the western part of this belt that cocoa was first introduced in the beginning of this century. "In the post-war years, and aided by the incidence of a disease fatal to mature cocoa trees, known commonly as 'Swollen Shoot', in the Ilaro and Ibadan districts, the growing centre has shifted east" (C.Beer 1976:9). Though the fact has hardly been documented in the literature, it should be made clear that the shifting process has also, to some extent at least, taken place in northerly direction, mainly by migrant farmers from the Egba-Egbado areas into the Igangan forest reserve.
6. In drawing these distinctions between Yoruba hunters and



farmers I am not implying that occupationally they are organised in mutually exclusive groups or castes. In fact many farmers often take time off from the farm to do some hunting, or more commonly snaring of small game, just as many hunters may also be part-time farmers. Nevertheless, hunters are organised in special societies, and hence occupy a distinct status and role within the social structure of the town.

7. Centres of greater urbanisation and technological or commercial importance seem to act as catalysts in making neighbouring towns develop in these directions. Examples of this trend can be found in many places: in Oṣogbo, for example, the old town expanded mainly in the direction of the railway rather than in the direction of Ilẹṣa or any other town. Similarly, in Ile-Ife there has been a very rapid expansion in westernly direction towards the city of Ibadan and the new Ife Univeristy campus.
8. In all cases, however, a distinction must be made between these terms and the term ilu ("town"). Ilu, whatever its size, always refers to a kingdom where people have their "real" homes (ile) and from where they derive their individual citizenship as Yoruba. The fact that many ilu recognised the king of another ilu as their overlord (for example, Iganna paid obeisance and tribute to the Alaafin of Oyo) does not alter this situation. Historically, however, farm settlements have sometimes developed into ilu. This process is in fact still going on in various parts of Yorubaland, where certain farm settlements have already developed into fully fledged towns.
9. Another term by which people refer to the farm labourers is oloko-nla ("using large hoe"). Though this is a Yoruba term, the "foreign-ness" of the agatu is brought out by the contrast between these large-bladed hoes and the shorter ones that the Yoruba use.

PART 2

THE CHANGING RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION



## CHAPTER V      PRE-COLONIAL IGANNA: PRODUCTION AND MODES OF DOMINATION

In this chapter I shall examine "the intermeshing of so-called "political", "economic" and social factors of change in one ongoing historical process" (Langdon 1974:123) as they were played out in Iganna up to the time of imposition of British rule in the 1890s, with the objective of building a model of the correlations between agricultural production and the ways in which modes of domination were realised in Iganna.

The major problem with this kind of exercise is that information on pre-colonial Iganna is scanty and has to be pieced together almost exclusively on the basis of oral traditions and inferences from present day customs, rituals, indigenous institutions, architectural features, landmarks, artifacts and the like. The literature provides only few explicit references to Iganna; but inasmuch as the town shared many socio-cultural features with other Yoruba towns within the Oyo kingdom, relevant information, both general and specific to other places, exists, and this will also be drawn upon.

Although the proposed outline will be somewhat impressionistic and short on quantitative data, it is believed that a plausible model of the process by which pre-colonial relations of production in this rural community have developed can be extrapolated, which will lead on to a better understanding of modern socio-cultural changes, including outmigration to the cities.

The pre-colonial development of Iganna within the Oyo kingdom will first be outlined in this chapter. Then agricultural production will be considered in relation to the polarisation existing between those controlling credit-power in the community and those dependent on it; the societal prerequisites and inherent areas of conflict of the model thus drawn up will then be probed, and the scope it offered for entrepreneurship to certain categories of people will be investigated. It will be found that those

prerequisites which made for continuity in the system centre on the one hand on the control farmers had over their products, and on the relative isolation of the town on the other.

# 1. Oyo imperialism and the growth of Iganna, c.1600-1893

The foundation of Iganna may be correlated roughly with the beginnings of Oyo's imperial expansion in West Africa at c.1600. For almost two centuries the successive Alaafin extended their power over a vast kingdom which included several hundred Yoruba towns. Administratively the kingdom was divided into a number of provinces (ekun)<sup>1</sup>, each under the authority of an important provincial ruler (as for example the Sabiganna, who was the paramount king (oba) in the ekun Otun). In the capital of Oyo, many chiefs and high ranking palace retainers acted as intermediaries between the Alaafin and the provincial kings (Johnson 1921:76). Internally, however, most towns retained their indigenous forms of government; the relative autonomy of the local oba (or bale, depending on whether the town had a crowned or uncrowned king) and their councils of chiefs in the running of the affairs of the town was a basic feature of social organisation, even during Oyo's imperial era. The extent to which Oyo's rule was effectively exercised over its subordinate towns varied widely depending on the current political situation and the political figures who emerged in the course of history.

Being located along the southwestern frontier area of the kingdom, Iganna was strategically important in safeguarding the integrity of Oyo. During the nineteenth century, after the fall of old Oyo in the 1830s and its reconstruction at its present site by Alaafin Atiba, the position of Iganna became crucial in the face of growing threat from Ilorin and Dahomey. This was also the period when many refugees from Oyo settled in Iganna, and the Sabiganna's bonds of personal loyalty to their Oyo overlords were at their most binding.

For the wider implications of this study it is important to note this close link between Iganna and Oyo, and the ways in which it developed: Iganna's loyalty to reactionary Alaafin



Ladugbolu during the colonial period will largely account for the town's stunted development, while the analysis of pre-colonial events leading to Iganna's close links with Oyo will expose some of the ways in which modes of domination developed and could be reproduced.

### 1.1 Iganna's foundation and growth up to the disintegration of the Oyo empire in the 1830s

According to Law the imperial expansion of Oyo in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was closely connected with its involvement in the Atlantic slave trade (1977:vii, 240). At the outset of this period of Oyo's military supremacy over kingdoms as far away as Allada and parts of Borgu and Nupe, Alaafin Obalokun steered a policy of consolodation within his own kingdom (ibid.: 149, 151ff).<sup>2</sup> From Johnson's recording of Oyo oral traditions we learn that during Alaafin Obalokun's reign "Sabiganna emigrated from the Sabe to the Yoruba country" (1921:168). This is corroborated by Iganna traditions which say that their king-founder, Sabi-Safa, alias Gendi, was a prince from the royal house of Save ("Sabe" in Yoruba) who, after losing the succession contest for the throne went into exile with his loyal supporters, eventually settling near the river Ofiki on the Alaafin's land. This exit from Save in easterly direction to the area between the rivers Opara and Ofiki is not surprising when we consider that at that time of Oyo's rising power this frontier land between the kingdoms of Ketu, Save and Oyo had become the home of exiled royals from various Yoruba towns, who lorded it over petty kingdoms including a number of small towns whose chiefs looked to more powerful overlords for support. Along the banks of the river Oyan was the town of Itile (of which only the village of Itasa remains, some fifteen miles west of Iganna), whose kings (Onitile) claim direct descent from the original line of Oranyan, the son of Oduduwa, who according to tradition founded Oyo (see Johnson 1921:669). Enjoying the allegiance of a dozen or more small settlements in the area, Itile claims to have maintained its independence of Oyo until its destruction by the Fulani in the middle of the nineteenth century<sup>3</sup>. Considering then that Oyo's political domination over its neighbours (Dahomey, Nupe, Ekiti, etc.) depended on both military power and control of trade routes (Law 1977:183ff, 201ff, 240), the consolidation of a



western outpost like Iganna by exiles from a neighbouring kingdom (in a border area renowned for its insubordinate local chiefs) may well be interpreted as a carefully planned strategic move by the Alaafin. The high rank and special privileges bestowed on the Iganna kings would support this interpretation. These honours included the Sabiganna's integration into the kingdom as a high ranking provincial king<sup>4</sup> with precedence over many of his peers, and the right to keep in his own palace shrines for Oranyan, Aganju and Aibio, three deified ancestors of the Alaafin<sup>5</sup>.

Iganna oral traditions state that their royal ancestor Sabi-Safa first had to prove his loyalty to the Alaafin by joining his army during a military campaign before he was allowed to settle with his Save followers on the east bank of the Ofiki. Such a procedure was not unusual, since the kings of Oyo were in the habit of recruiting army contingents from the provincial towns to reinforce their troops whenever they went to war (Johnson 1921:131ff; Fadipe 1970:238ff). Iganna oral traditions nowadays refer to the war which their royal founder fought for the Alaafin as the "Eleduwe war", mistakenly crediting their town-founder-king with the gallant fight put up by the Sabiganna in Ilorin at least two centuries after the foundation of the town (in the 1830s. See Johnson 1921:263ff; also Law 1977:294-5).

However strong the bonds of personal loyalty between the Sabiganna and his overlord the Alaafin at the time of Iganna's foundation, effective control over the settlements in the western borderland seems to have been achieved only partially by the second half of the eighteenth century. Fifteen miles west of Iganna lay the petty kingdom of Itile, whose kings did not recognise the Alaafin as overlord; nearer to Iganna, a number of settlements along the west bank of the Ofiki (such as Ikia, Sunsun, Agba and Eri) supported Aiyede, a town founded by an exiled prince from Iganna. Military incursions into this area by the Igannans on at least one occasion were successfully beaten back by the local chiefs there<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, effective control of the area by Oyo would seem to have been established by the end of the eighteenth century, since the Atlantic trade route from Badagri to Old Oyo established under Alaafin Abiodun ran across it (see Morton-Williams, 1967:40-1). From the itinerary followed by the Lander



brothers in 1830 it can be gathered that the trade route passed through Sunsun and Tudi, at distances of five and nine miles west of Iganna (R. & J. Lander 1834)<sup>7</sup>.

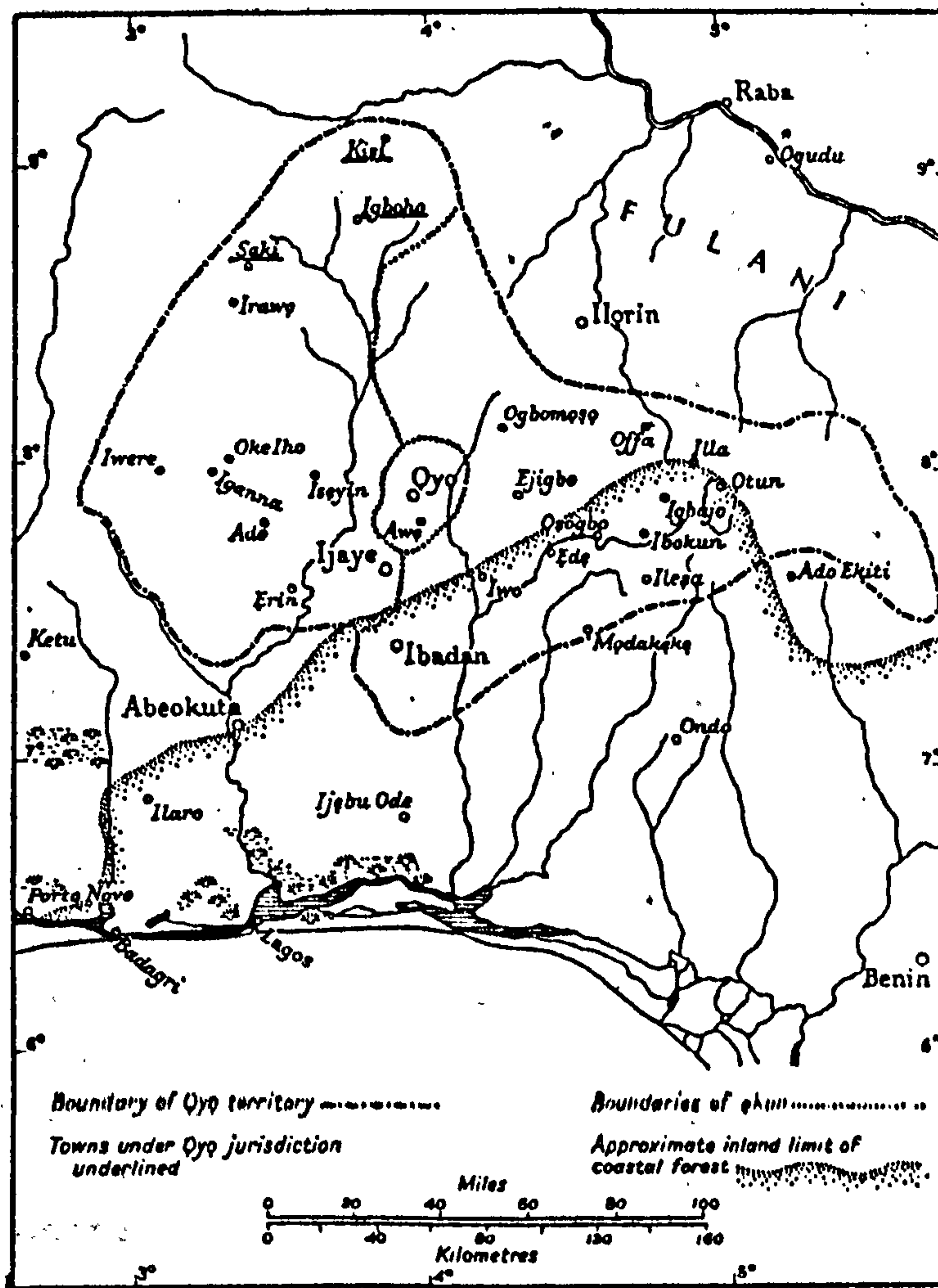
That an important town such as Iganna should have been bypassed by the Atlantic trade route is indicative of the Alaafin's strategies with regard to his high ranking chiefs at the time the Oyo empire was at its peak. Rather than involve them effectively in the administration of the empire, he chose to recruit governors and other officials from among his palace slaves (Law 1977:110); the towns along the Atlantic trade route in particular had ajele (governors) directly appointed by the Alaafin (Morton-Williams 1967:40). This policy of monopolising power and alienating subordinate traditional rulers both in Oyo and the provinces from the administration of the empire sowed the seeds of disloyalty and rebellion, which multiplied rapidly after Alaafin Abiodun's death in 1789 (Morton-Williams 1967:43; Law 1977:245ff). In the following decades successive Alaafin continued to lose control over their dependencies, while within the kingdom the military power of Ilorin (following the Fulani jihad) increasingly overshadowed that of the capital Oyo. In the mid-1830s the fate of Oyo was finally sealed when its army suffered a crushing defeat by the Ilorins and Alaafin Oluewu himself was killed (in the "Eleduwe war" mentioned above). The Ilorin's victory had been sped on by betrayals by some leading Yoruba chiefs, including the renegade prince Atiba of Ago Oja and Timi Bamigbaiye of Ede (Law 1977:295). Shortly afterwards the capital of Oyo was abandoned (ibid.), and refugees from Old Oyo resettled in other towns further south, including Iganna.

## 1.2 Nineteenth century Iganna: the era of Yoruba warfare

### 1.21 Fulani and Dahomean incursions into western Yorubaland

After the fall of Old Oyo and until the end of the eighteenth century Iganna continued to grow in size and strategic importance, mainly as a result of the influx of refugees from towns sacked in the wars. North and northwest of Iganna the Fulani-ruled Ilorins continued to raid the countryside as late as the 1850s.

Map 6b. The Oyo-  
kingdom at the  
death of Atiba  
(c.1859)  
(from Morton-  
Williams, 1967:  
47).





In the second half of the century the Dahomeans raided deep into western Yorubaland, eventually chasing the Igannans from their town at around 1884. In the twenty years of Alaafin Atiba's reign there had been little threat from Dahomey for Oyo, at least to the extent that Atiba was successful in deploying the growing military powers of Ibadan and Ijaye in a precariously maintained internal peace within what was then left of the old Oyo kingdom (compare maps 6a and 6b). After his death, however, and the fall of Ijaye at the hands of the Ibadans in 1862, the Oyo kingdom became more and more prey to internecine wars and the growing threat from Dahomey. Iganna and the other towns in the upper Ogun area west of Oyo (Ado, Iseyin, Irawo, etc) which in Atiba's time had been placed under the military protection of Ijaye, became frequent targets of Dahomean attacks. Rather than put themselves under the protection of their new conqueror, the bale of Ibadan, these towns (where many of the Alaafin's closest kin lived after the destruction of Old Oyo) chose to be governed directly by Oyo (Atanda 1973:43; Ajayi 1964:122). The effective protection that Oyo could provide, however, seems to have been minimal; nor could Ibadan prevent the Ibarapa towns of Asunira, Ayite, Apodun, Igangan etc., south and southeast of Iganna (which it had taken over from Ijaye) from being overrun by the Dahomeans. The survivors of these raids scattered in various directions, usually seeking refuge in larger towns. Iganna, like Okeho, Iseyin, Shaki and other Yoruba towns, developed to its present size only in the last century, when refugees from sacked towns took residence within its walls. The sites of these sacked towns have long since reverted to bush and farming land, only scattered potsherds and slag heaps from extinct forges bearing witness to the life existing there a century ago.

The largest groups of refugees to Iganna came from the neighbouring towns of Ikia and Aiyede. In spite of their traditional antagonism, the bale of these towns became quarter chiefs under the overlordship of the Sabiganna. Dozens of smaller groups of refugees from many different towns also founded compounds in Iganna. On the whole, Yoruba kings considered it a boon to their towns when new arrivals sought to settle on their land (Fadipe 1970:100, 169-70)<sup>8</sup>. Map 2 presents an overall picture of the growth of

Iganna in the nineteenth century. The expansion of the town in the directions of Okeho, Awaye and Iwere-ile is relatively recent; the oldest part of Iganna is around the centre, from the palace and the surrounding area of the Sabiganna's own quarter and including the adjoining parts of Bada's and Agbakin's quarters. The rest are all nineteenth century additions (see Map 2).

Finally, in the early 1880s (before the second sacking of Ketu and Save in 1886 and 1887 respectively - see Parrinder 1956:55, 62) Dahomey launched yet another major attack into western Yorubaland, which was to mark the beginning of Iganna's prolonged exile on the neighbouring Okeho hills. In the course of their offensive the Dahomeans sacked the towns west of Iganna, including Ijio, Idiko, Ilaji, Aiyetoro and Iwere, whose inhabitants lived for several decades on emergency settlements perched on top of the nearby granite hills (see Gleave, 1963). Halfway between Iwere and Iganna, at the Ofare stream, the Dahomeans faced a large army from Oyo reinforced by contingents from Iseyin, Okeho, Iganna and many other towns. The Dahomeans retreated after the battle, but the Alaafin's army (described by French Catholic missionaries as ill-organised, ill-equipped and low in morale<sup>9</sup>) seems to have taken by far the heaviest toll. Among those killed was the Balogun of the Igannans.

After this defeat Sabiganna Olabiyi and the bulk of the Iganna people took refuge in a new settlement, Iganna-ita-Ara, in the well-protected Okeho hills nine miles east of Iganna. Though the Igannans were to stay there until after the establishment of British rule in the 1890s their town was never sacked by the Dahomeans, and people continued to cultivate the farm land near the town while some even lived there for most of the time.

## 1.22 The political and cultural structure of 19th century Iganna

The strong Oyo identity which characterises the chieftaincy institution and the orisa cults in Iganna was shaped in the course of the nineteenth century. According to Morton-Williams,



government in Atiba's Oyo centred on the interplay between three major foci of power: the king (Alaafin), the Council of State (Oyomesi), and the Ogboni cult of the Earth<sup>10</sup> (1967:52ff). Nominally the king held absolute power; the Oyomesi, as representatives of the Oyo people, were his advisors, and the Ogboni (recruited from among influential and affluent townspeople) added to his ritual powers. In actual fact the structural opposition, central to Oyo politics, lay in a division of roles: the Alaafin was head of government, trade, crafts and cults; the Oyomesi, though executors of his orders could also oppose him, and in some cases even pronounce his rejection. Moreover, at his death they would decide on his successor. The Ogboni, who sanctioned the shedding of blood (considered a crime against the Earth), were politically most influential in their secret deliberations on government policy (ibid.).

This was the type of government which developed in Iganna in the nineteenth century, when many prominent immigrants were honoured with chieftaincy and/or ritual offices modelled on those existing in Oyo<sup>11</sup>. Eight distinct quarters had already been carved out in the town before the exile to Okeho. Each quarter was put under the headmanship of a senior chief, with a number of lesser chiefs ranking under him. As in Oyo, the senior chiefs constituted a Council of State which daily deliberated with the Sabiganna and his ilari (retainers) on all matters pertaining to the people, especially hearing cases brought before them. Also in accordance with the Oyo model was the central place occupied by the Ogboni secret society, which had its lodge within the palace precincts (see appendix III).

Immigrants who hailed from Oyo were always welcomed in Iganna, and readily honoured with chiefly and ritual offices. Generally, for reasons of political expediency, chieftaincies were conferred on prominent immigrants commanding large followings. Many of these had in fact been chiefs, or even bale, in their towns of origin. By offering them new chieftaincies the Sabiganna not only enticed them and their followers to settle, thus augmenting the population of the town, but he also aimed at tying them to himself as loyal clients.

On settling in Iganna new arrivals brought with them the orisa cults of their lineages in their towns of origin. Some of these cults were specifically related to the spirits of particular sites in these towns<sup>12</sup>, but the majority of the cults encountered in Iganna were widespread in the Oyo culture area. The most important were those of Egungun, Oro, Ifa, Sango, Ogun, Osanyin, Orisala, Yemoja, Osun, and Orisa-oko. The offices of chief priest in some of these cult societies (which cut across the lineage-based compound groupings) were vested in chiefly lineages which had migrated to Iganna from Oyo; as for example the Alapini, who was head of the Egungun masquerading cult which dealt with witchcraft and sorcery (Schiltz 1978:53), and the chiefs Gbonka and Mogaji, who as descendants from Oyo controlled the Yemoja cult which was closely related to the powerful cult of Sango. The Alaafin had used this cult on several occasions to exert control over the towns within his kingdom (see Morton-Williams, 1967:68). As priest of the Yemoja cult the chief Mogaji of Iganna was also charged with the initiation of certain abiku children named Agbonyin<sup>13</sup>. These children had to become spiritually related to the Alaafin (Yemoja being the mother of Sango, the Alaafin's ancestor), and were therefore given the abaja-mefa facial marks of the Oyo royal clan. The office of oluwo (or olu-awo), head of the babalawo confraternity in Iganna, was also entrusted to immigrants from Oyo<sup>14</sup>.

Finally it should be noted that this expansion of Iganna took place under Sabiganna Edunjobi. It was during his reign (c.1840-50) that the people of Aiyede, Ikia and other threatened towns crossed the Ofiki and settled in Iganna. Around the same period Alaafin Atiba further strengthened his ties with Iganna by giving the Sabiganna an Oyo princess in marriage. Since she was a daughter of the Oyo royal lineage of Isokun whose chief acted as "official" father to the Alaafin (Johnson 1921:42, 68), all successors to the Iganna royal throne since that time have proudly considered themselves matrilateral descendants of Atiba's dynasty<sup>15</sup>.

### 1.23 The rising power of the war chiefs

The escalation of warfare in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century



brought about important changes in the social organisation of the various kingdoms. The most significant of these changes was the rising power of the warriors, which competed and at times even overshadowed that of the constitutional kings. In such situations the traditional rulers often reacted by conferring chieftaincy offices to the powerful warriors. Thus military power was given legitimacy, but at the same time the holders of this power became functionally integrated into the existing chieftaincy structures, which implied their de jure subordination and loyalty to the kings. However, de facto developments in the nineteenth century clearly indicate that in many instances the political scene was dominated by the military, while kings often had to steer a precarious course in order to hold on to their traditional rights. The Alaafin's power from the time of Atiba, steadily eroding under constant challenge from Ibadan war chiefs, is exemplary of these changing power-authority relations in many Yoruba kingdoms at the time. The capture of slaves, always a major objective of warfare, now spiralled as the institution of slavery developed in an unprecedented way: the increasing market value of slaves made slave raiding and trading a most profitable source of income for kings and successful freebooters alike, while the deployment of slaves, as soldiers or domestic producers, became widespread<sup>16</sup>.

The most important lineages which rose to power in Iganna in the second half of the nineteenth century were those of Jagun and Balogun. Jagun's lineage traces its origin to the royal lineage of the Onjo of Okeho. An exiled prince from this lineage became at one time a reputed warrior who eventually settled in the (former) town of Eri near Iwere, attracting other bale from small towns in the area who became dependent on Jagun for protection. When by the mid-nineteenth century the Fulani had pushed their raids as far as the west bank of the Ofiki river, the refugees from Eri, Aiyede and other small towns settled in Iganna. On arrival Jagun was made quarter chief by the Sabiganna, while the bale of Eri was recognised only as a minor chief under him.

In Iganna the chiefs of Jagun are still remembered for their wealth and for the many slaves they acquired for their household.



But by the 1870s their prominence as warriors was abruptly superseded by the arrival of a new group of warriors from the town of Asunira, south of Iganna. Without consulting his chiefs the Sabiganna tried unilaterally to secure the loyalty of Akando, the leader of these warriors, by secretly installing him as his chief and conferring on him the title of Balogun. After performing a nocturnal installation ceremony at the Ogun shrine adjoining the palace, the Sabiganna presented his new Balogun to the other town chiefs on the following morning. That there was no opposition to the king's move might be a measure of Akando's reputation as a warrior at a time when Dahomey was presenting an ever increasing threat to the safety of the Igannans. When a new town quarter was carved out for Balogun not only the adjoining compounds, but several others scattered throughout the town (see Map 2) placed themselves directly under the new chief's headmanship; an additional indication of his political stature at the time.

When Balogun Akando died at the battle of the Ofare in 1884 (where the Alaafin's army was fighting Dahomean aggressors) he was succeeded by Ogundeji. Ogundeji came to dominate Iganna's internal politics to an extent revealed after Sabiganna Olabiyi's death during the Igannan's period of exile in Okeho, when the kingmakers installed Ojo Alatise as successor. Balogun Ogundeji rejected this appointment on the grounds that the kingmakers had not followed the order of rotation between the royal houses as was customary, and had chosen a candidate who belonged to the same royal house of Baya as his predecessor. The dispute escalated into a town riot in which Ojo Alatise narrowly escaped death by fleeing the town, accompanied by his ilari and other loyal supporters. Having thus put his opponents to rout, Balogun Ogundeji chose Oladokun from the royal house of Ajimati as the new Sabiganna. Shortly afterwards Ogundeji appointed Oladejo of the royal house of Polajo regent for those Igannans who had stayed in their home town or had returned there from Okeho. There was also an injunction to this appointment, that should Oladejo survive the king elect he would succeed to the throne.

I shall discuss in the following chapter how the subsequent imposition of British rule in the 1890s brought Balogun Ogundeji's



power politics in Iganna to nought. But this was an act of external intervention; what remains significant and unprecedented is the rapid internal change which took place in Iganna during the last decades of the nineteenth century under the impact of expanding warfare and slave raiding, as a result of which effective power passed from the Sabiganna and his quarter chiefs to the new war chiefs, Jagun, and especially the Balogun Akando and Ogundeji.

## 2. Production and modes of domination/subordination

The preceding account related Iganna's pre-colonial development to the rise and decline of Oyo imperialism. The causes underlying the fortunes of Oyo itself were probed extensively, and it is hoped that historical and archaeological research will continue to throw light on Oyo's past. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a consensus among historians that Oyo's imperial expansion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was due largely to its superior military strength, especially the effective use made of the cavalry strike force (Morton-Williams 1967:37; Law 1977:198, *passim*). The wealth which accrued in the Oyo kingdom at the time of the imperial expansion came mainly from the long distance trade, and especially from the Atlantic slave trade. Control over this trade and the trade routes was brought increasingly under the direct supervision of the Alaafin and his palace staff. The subsequent decline of Oyo towards the end of the eighteenth century has been attributed to various causes; Law (1977:245) argues that the disintegration of the empire started in the centre, with the leading chiefs' and provincial Yoruba kings' opposition to the Alaafin's strategies of amassing huge personal wealth. Since it was these chiefs and subordinate kings who recruited most of the army contingents and cavalry to fight Oyo's wars and secure its integrity, these dissensions weakened the military strength of the Alaafin.

The historical sketch attempted in particular to isolate the external factors of change that characterised the near-three centuries of Iganna's inclusion in the Oyo kingdom. It was

found that throughout this period the fortunes of those who rose to power were clearly founded on their access to and control over external resources of wealth-power. Obvious examples are the Alaafin's involvement in the Atlantic slave trade until the latter part of the eighteenth century and the big scramble for domestic slaves by rivalling Yoruba kings and their powerful chiefs in the course of the inter-tribal wars of the following century.

A look at the town's internal organisation will help to broaden the analysis. Since the various settlers from various lineages lived primarily off the land, I shall focus the discussion on how local resources were made use of and how local production and social organisation articulated with the external developments mentioned above.

## 2.1 Symbolic capital, modes of domination and "gentle exploitation": Bourdieu's model

Law's argument that the breakup of the Oyo empire "started at the centre" reveals the limits of power predicated by the very structure and organisation of pre-colonial Yoruba society. This needs fuller explanation. First, the accumulation of wealth and the control of power (military or otherwise) were closely linked; wealth, usually concomitant with chiefly or royal office, constituted a capital of power assets that was expected to be used as a source of credit to which followers and subjects could gain access. Hence wealth-power, to become legitimised in the eyes of the people, had to be shared and redistributed in the form of gifts, favours, benefits, loans, patronage and displays of liberality, especially at the occasion of feasts. Only in this way could the fragile bonds of loyalty and personal obligation on which power-wealth relations depended be built and reproduced. Thus the breakup of the Oyo empire at the centre can be explained in terms of the Alaafin's failure effectively to deploy his accumulated wealth-power as a source of credit in the manner just indicated. Indeed, the main beneficiaries of the Alaafin's assets were the members of his palace staff, with the subordinate chiefs and provincial kings largely left out.



Taking Law's argument as a cue I shall now take up the analysis of the interplay between the accumulation of wealth and the setting up and maintenance of power-authority relations with particular reference to pre-colonial Iganna.

The analytic model which I shall use for this discussion centres on the three interrelated key concepts of symbolic capital, modes of domination and "gentle" or "hidden" exploitation, as outlined by Bourdieu in his Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977). Economic power, the author explains, does not lie in wealth as such but

in the relationship between wealth and a field of economic relations,... it is in this relationship that wealth is constituted in the form of capital, that is, as the instrument for appropriating the institutional equipment and the mechanisms indispensable to the functioning of the field, and thereby also appropriating the profits from it (pp 184-5).

Further,

Economic calculations must be extended to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after. These may be "fair words" or smiles, handshakes or shrugs, compliments or attention, challenges or insults, honour or honours, powers or pleasures, gossip or scientific information, distinction or distinctions, etc. (p 178).

Hence

the patrimony of a family or lineage includes not only their land and instruments of production but also their kin and their clientele,..., the network of alliances, or, more broadly, of relationships, to be kept up and regularly maintained, representing a heritage of commitments and debts of honour, a capital of rights and duties built up in the course of successive generations and providing a additional source of strength which can be called upon when extra-ordinary situations break in upon the daily routine (ibid.).

In a Yoruba context such an extraordinary situation could arise when new farm plots are to be made in the bush, this being a labour intensive task. What Bourdieu refers to as the discontinuity of the "labour period" (p 179) is relevant here: whereas the "labour period" is often short, the "productive period" (labour period plus time required for crops to grow) spreads out over most of the year. This "discontinuity" then enabled the farmer to call on the labour of his household dependants whenever he needed their services, without, however, having to maintain them continuously. This was achieved by

giving the various categories of dependants (sons, wives, slaves, debt-labourers) the time to work on their own reproduction<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, the generosity and affability ascribed to this gesture resulted in the accumulation of a

capital of prestige and renown which was readily convertible back into economic capital in a society in which production for wealth depended on collective labour (p 179).

This Bourdieu calls "symbolic capital" which he further describes as

always credit, in the widest sense of the word, i.e. a sort of advance which the group alone can grant those who give it the best material and symbolic guarantees. [It can be seen then] that the exhibition of symbolic capital (which is always very expensive in economic terms) is one of the mechanisms which ... makes capital go to capital (p 181).

It would seem, then, that initially symbolic capital and the actual spending of wealth (which I shall term "material capital") have to move in opposite directions in order for the conversion of the one into the other to be realised. For example, a wealthy man may incur great expenditure in major funeral celebrations for his parents; but at the same time he would be building up a symbolic capital of renown for doing what is proper, and would be congratulated for his lavish expenditure with such greetings as e ku inawo ("greetings on your spending money"). When at a later date a less wealthy man is faced with the funeral of his parent pressure would be on him to spend equally lavishly on the feast. In order to meet the costs he would seek the help of the wealthy man who not only set the high norm previously but who also enjoyed the reputation of being "helpful". After receiving a loan from this helpful man the poor man would perform debt labour for him for a few years until he raised the money to pay back the loan. In this way the wealthy man's material capital was reproduced, having also profited from his debtor's labour. The accumulated wealth then fed back into the creditor's renown, so that capital had truly gone to capital.

Production for wealth, which as Bourdieu points out depends on collective labour, inevitably results in relations of social inequality, certainly in Yoruba society as this example has



illustrated. The relationships set up in this process are such that one individual is able to gain control or dominance over others by making them somehow dependent on him. The ways in which such relationships become institutionalised and are reproduced over time vary widely from one socio-cultural context to another. Contrasting these modes of domination Bourdieu says

Once a system of mechanisms has been constituted capable of objectively ensuring the reproduction of the established order by its own motion (...), the dominant class have only to let the system they dominate take its own course in order to exercise their domination; but until such a system exists, ... they are obliged to resort to the elementary forms of domination, in other words, the direct domination of one person by another.... They cannot appropriate the labour, services, goods, homage and respect of others without "winning" them personally, "tying" them - in short, creating a bond between persons (p 190).

The pervasiveness and importance of interpersonal, face-to-face relationships in pre-industrial societies is a familiar feature for the anthropologist; the real merit of Bourdieu's conceptual model lies in that it ties the modes of domination in with production for wealth, recognising that in these societies wealth, and the labour time and effort which went into producing it, were constantly being disguised. Hence what really mattered in socio-cultural terms was what Bourdieu has termed the "accumulation and exhibition of symbolic capital" as defined earlier.

This point is born out in the histories of many chiefly Iganna idile, where it is said that the first chief of the idile was installed not so much for his wealth as for his reputation as a generous spender (o le nawo - "he is capable of spending"). What is not mentioned, however, is that the wealth allowing such spending was produced by slaves, client soldiers, debtors or household dependants. Just as land was not a commodity, being readily given to those who needed it (Fadipe 1970:170), neither was there a market for labour. Bourdieu illustrates how in traditional societies time is the one thing which is not scarce and can be "squandered"<sup>18</sup> by quoting a Kabyl saying: "If the peasant counted he would not sow" (1977:176). In Yoruba communities, this attitude to time meant that the person who had tied others to him in order to control and appropriate their labour was at the same time expected to be generous, both in using the wealth produced as

credit (see above) and in granting lots of spare time to the producers. These facilities, which the group interpreted as manifestations of the chief's or elder's affability and generosity, served in fact to disguise the relationship of domination-subordination which enabled the non-producer to appropriate part of the labour output of direct producers. It is this type of relationship to which Bourdieu refers as "gentle" or "hidden" exploitation (1977:192-3) in contrast to the more obvious forms of blatant or violent exploitation. This is not to say that these other forms of exploitation did not also emerge at certain moments in the history of Yoruba kingdoms; Johnson's History of the Yoruba (1921) abounds with instances of despotic Alaafin, but these can be coupled with instances of rulers who after losing the support of their chiefs were confronted with rebellion, or else were forced to go into exile or even commit suicide.

## 2.2 The household as unit of agricultural production

### 2.21 Agricultural production

Agricultural production drew on the labour input of most men and women in Iganna; even specialists - hunters, blacksmiths, traders, manufacturers of artifacts - were at least part-time agricultural producers. Farms were located within a radius of four to five miles from the town, so daily commuting was common. The intensity of work varied with the time of the year and the type of work that went with it; preparing plots in the bush and planting was always a time of intense activity, while weeding and harvesting were more leisurely tasks. In the first part of the dry season (November to end of January) very little work was required on the farm, so large groups of men would join the hunters in collective hunting parties. The busiest time for farmers was from February to the end of the annual rains in October (Ojo 1966:66). A hard day's work for a farmer might have totalled eight hours a day, with most work being done between sunrise and midday, followed by a long recess and a resumption of activities from three in the afternoon until dusk at around six or seven. However, the average number of working hours over a length of time was well below



this; Fadipe writes that "inspite of their industry, the level of productivity is adversely affected by several factors" (1970:166), among which he lists time spent on celebrating orisa. The most important factor, however, he considers sickness (malaria, guinea-worm, etc.), either suffered by the farmers or by their relatives or friends. There were strong social pressures to remain by the sickbed or deathbed of relatives and friends.

Low productivity could also be accounted for by environmental factors such as the prolonged rains during the wet season which kept farmers indoors. Technologically also production was limited by the use of hand tools (hoe and machette) and the traditional method of planting a single crop per plot (as opposed to the two or more planted nowadays). Finally it should be recalled, as Ojo (1966:52) mentions, that average farm sizes in the old days did not exceed two acres, to today's three or more<sup>19</sup>.

## 2.22 The household's labour pool

Unlike most craft activities which were practised by individual specialists and were geared towards a clientele, foodcrop production was primarily geared towards household consumption (although production for tribute, levies and marketing was also important, as I shall discuss later). As a unit of production a household consisted of a nuclear family: a man, his wife or wives, and their children (not necessarily their offspring, because of the custom for children to be brought up by their maternal relatives). The customs of pawning young people to creditors (see below) and of keeping domestic slaves could also add to or detract from household numbers. Households were transitory units, started when a young couple set up house together in the man's compound (residence on marriage being virilocal) and dissolved when the couple's children in their turn married and set up their own households, thus securing the continuity of the wider lineage-based units.

It was the householder's responsibility to maintain his wife or wives, children and other dependants. This maintenance

included the provision of food, shelter and clothing, as well as working capital for the wives to start a craft or trade. If the women were not given sufficient crops from the farm to feed the household they would expect their husbands to give them cash to buy what was needed. Whatever a woman earned through animal husbandry, craft production or trading was hers, although as a wife she had to assist her husband in agricultural production by helping with the harvesting and taking over the subsequent work of transporting produce from the farm to the town and processing the crops into staples. This included many tedious and time consuming activities such as making maize gruel (ogi), casava meal (gari) and yam flour (elubo). The cooking of food was also a female activity, as was the selling of the husband's cash crops, for which the wife would receive a commission (Fadipe 1970:88, 149; Oroge 1971:150). A married couple did not have a common budget. But although the wife's income was kept separate from her husband's (Sudarkasa 1973:120) she was nevertheless expected to contribute towards her own and her children's expenses (Fadipe 1970:88).

Jurally a woman was under the authority of her husband and viewed as his co-producer; the capital outlay which she received from her husband in order to start a trade, or the commission she received for selling his market crops, is interpreted by Ekundare (1969:25) as a liberal gesture on the part of the man. The poor farmer's wife, with her small capital and little time to spare from the daily household chores, had very restricted scope for engaging in a craft or in trade. Therefore the women most involved in money-making activities were either separated from their husbands or widows, or else senior wives of affluent polygynists whose junior co-wives shouldered most of the daily household routines (Fadipe 1970:147). Thus this, rather individualistic economic sphere provided a forum where women could assert their relative independence of the men.

From a very early age children would follow their parents about and learn their skills. Small boys would trot behind their fathers to the farm and perform such tasks as they were physically able to. Fadipe (1970:155) states that at about the



age of ten they were given hoeing work, and by fifteen their work was on a par with that of adult men. Young men working with their fathers would be given a small plot of their own to cultivate, which they would usually do in the afternoons. Any money they earned from selling their own crops they could spend on clothes or entertainment with their age mates (ibid.). This seemingly liberal gesture had its advantages for the parents: in the first place the offer of reward enticed the young men to work harder in the mornings, while at the same time their cash-earning activities relieved their parents from spending much money on them; in the longer term, possible rebelliousness in young men impatient to become independent was neutralised by this offer of autonomous production. Normally a man did not marry before the age of about thirty, and only when his first child was born was it the custom for his father to present him with a set of hoe and machette, plots of land and private rooms in the compound for himself and his wife (these being the formal tokens of his emancipation as a householder-producer in his own right). By then, however, he would already have put in a good ten years of adult labour time on his parents' farm.

For girls childhood was also a period of drawn-out apprenticeship preparatory to their future adult roles. In accordance with the sexual division of labour girls were expected to look after small children and to help their mothers with cooking and other household tasks. At the same time they would assist their mothers in their trade and craft occupations. They could also start earning money of their own while still dependent on their parents; they might be given a commission on the sales when assisting a trader, or in their spare time they could be doing some petty trading of their own. These activities were encouraged, for in their adult lives they were expected to be industrious and entrepreneurial. Girls were married at about twenty, some ten years earlier than boys. High value was put on women's fertility; so brides with many years of childbearing in front of them were much desired; also, fathers were impatient to establish new affinal links and receive brideprice for the girls who, while they stayed at home, were of greater assistance to

their mothers than to them.

## 2.23 The concepts of idile and agbole

Though the household was important as a unit of production-consumption, the wider kin-based groupings identified as idile and agbole (or simply ile) were politically and ideologically most prominent. People who can trace descent from a common male ancestor through known or putative agnatic links are members of the same idile (from idi, "root", "bottom" or "base", and ile, "house" or "home"). Analytically, therefore, we may call the idile an agnatic descent group or patri-lineage. The relationship acknowledged between people of common descent is expressed by the term ebi (bi meaning "to give birth to" or "born of"). In its strictest sense ebi means agnate, agnatic group, or the relationship between agnates; hence the term omo l'ebi ("children of (same) birth") designates, strictly speaking, agnatic kin. In certain contexts, however, the term ebi may also include close matrilineal kin. A broader and more ego-focused kinship term is ibatan; while ebi is more strict in its reference to agnatic relations (at least in northwestern Yorubaland), ibatan refers more generally to any relative, including matrilineal kin, with whom a blood (eje) link is assumed. Igannans convey this by the expression eje kannaa ni won ("they are of the same blood"). Sexual relations between ibatan, and certainly between ebi, are thus always considered incestuous.

The term for affines is ana. Ana can be used by ego to refer to his relatives through marriage, but it also has a non-ego based usage when it expresses the enduring affinal relations between two descent groups.

The concept of the idile was a very strong principle of social organisation in Iganna; it was through their idile that people acquired citizenship in the town, and through their idile that they gained access to craft or trade occupations, insofar as these were lineage-based. Access to ritual offices was often also by virtue of membership in the idile which had the custody of an orisa cult. Rights in land and real estate were also



vested in the idile, and held corporately by all members. With regard to inheritance, the principal beneficiaries were the deceased person's junior full siblings (Johnson 1921:326; Fadipe 1970:140-3). Succession to chiefly office was in theory reserved for the agnatic relatives of the previous incumbent (but as we shall see below this rule was repeatedly flouted). Finally, people's behaviour was morally sanctioned by the respect and concern they showed for their idile's ancestors and the orisa those ancestors had been dedicated to. Sickness, premature death and many other misfortunes were often attributed to neglect of or disrespect for these supernatural forces.

Closely related to the concept of idile is that of agbole (from agbo, "flock", and ile, "house"). The agbole is in fact the cluster of buildings and courtyards that make up a compound in the town. In Iganna each agbole theoretically housed one of the idile founded in the town, and was thus thought of as an ancestral compound. This did not mean that all the members of the idile resided within their agbole. Far from it; apart from a core of people claiming agnatic descent from the founder of the compound, members of many other idile also lived there.

This tendency of idile members to disperse can be seen as the combination of two main factors. First, virilocal marriage meant that women lived away from their natal compounds. Secondly, children often lived matrilocally; daughters would move to their husbands' compounds on marriage, but sons often chose to stay on in the compounds they grew up in. An example of idile dispersion over four generations to four agbole within Iganna appears in figures 4a and 4b.

Figure 4a groups the various individuals according to their idile membership, and shows the affinal links between the men of Orukotan's lineage and those of the other three lineages. Figure 4b shows how affinal and matrilateral links were made use of when the men of Orukotan's lineage came to reside in agbole other than their ancestral one.

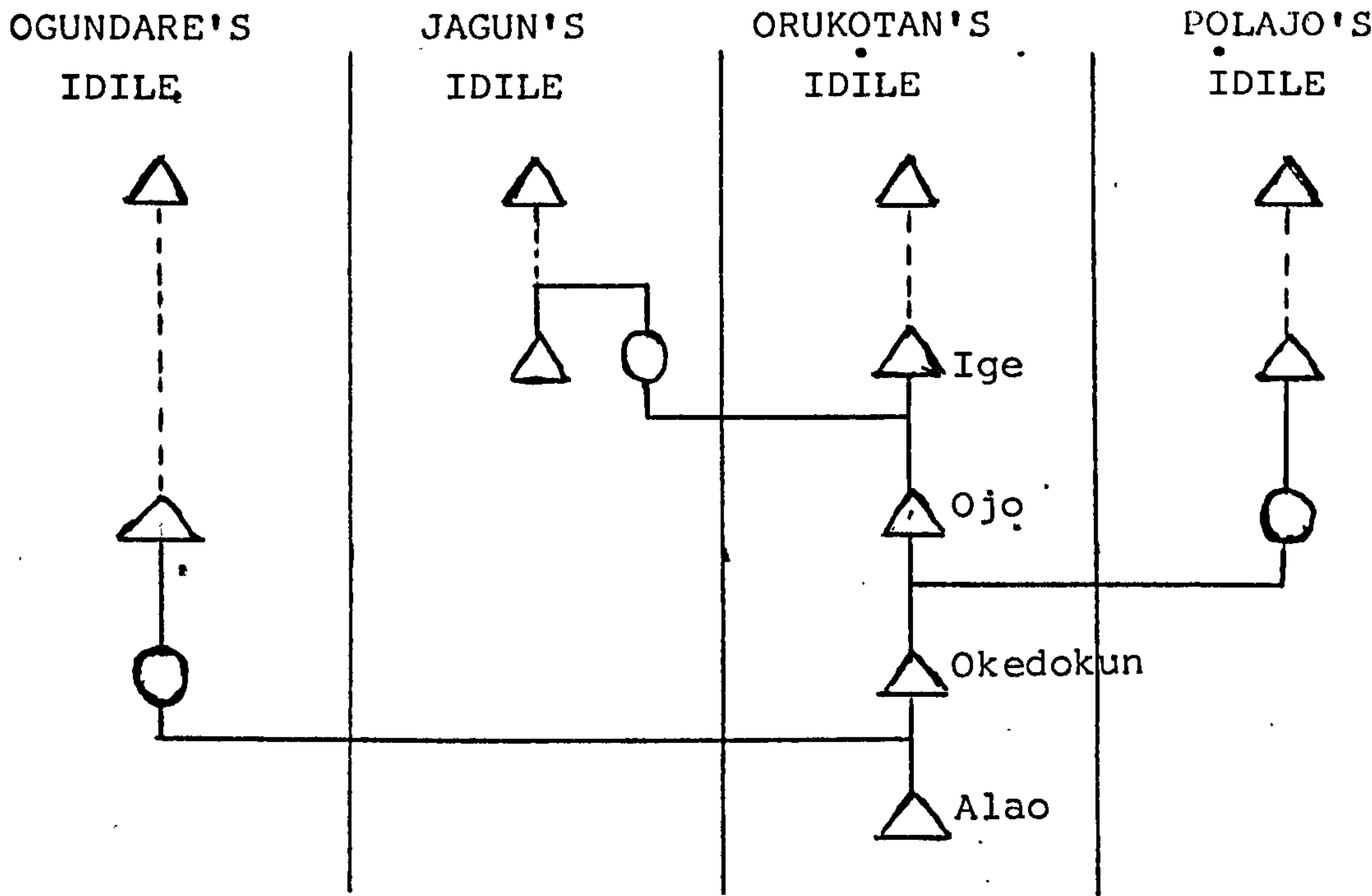


Figure 4a

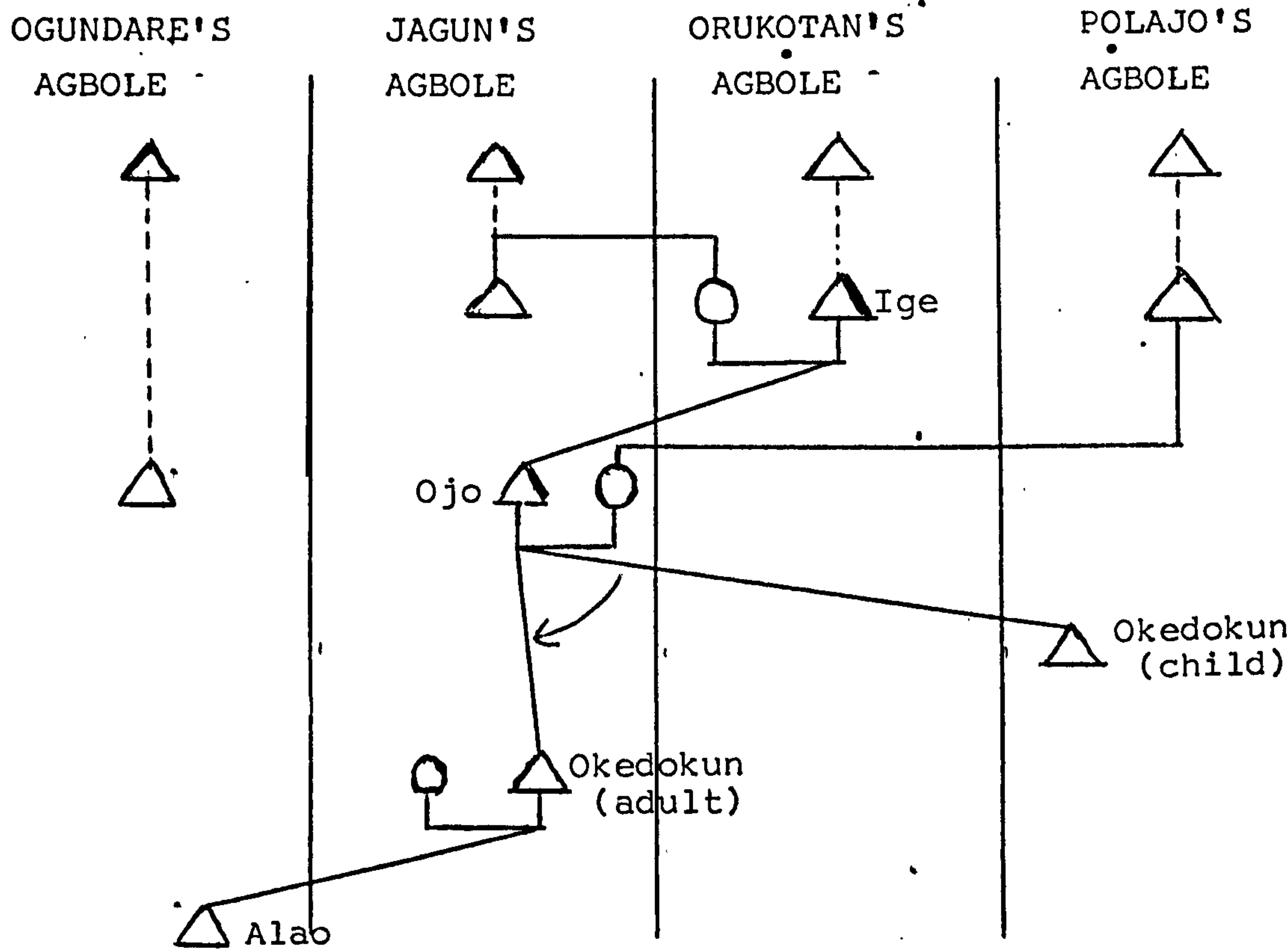


Figure 4b

Example of non-correlation between idile membership and agbole residence



Writing about the northern Yoruba (in which Igannans are included), Lloyd has noted the importance they attach to agnatic descent, in contrast to the more cognatic southern Yoruba (1974:33). While I would not dispute this, I must stress that in everyday life Igannans make extensive use of their cognatic ties, especially matrilateral ones. Many men prefer to live matrilocally because in their youth they were treated with more affection by their matrikin than their patrikin. As adult residents in their maternal agbole they can actively participate in all matters that concern that local group, while at the same time keeping their interests active in their fathers' agbole. A man may choose to reside matrilocally for a number of reasons; needful resources may be more accessible there, the people more to his liking or more influential and helpful than in his father's agbole. A not uncommon motive was the desire to become eligible for a chiefly office in the maternal agbole. Thus often non-agnates would contest offices in theory reserved for the agnatic descendants of the founder of the agbole<sup>20</sup>.

This frequent use made of matrilateral links must be understood with reference to the strong vested interests in affinal groups. These interests may be short or long term for the wife-givers and the wife-takers, but once they have been created the children of the household which has been established and their descendants are in a position to draw on these matrilateral links with the wife-givers' group, while the wife-givers' group will acknowledge their daughters' children as affines. In compounds where sub-lineages have thus become firmly established through a matrilateral connection with the host idile this affinal link can remain active for generations<sup>21</sup>, although in most everyday agbole affairs differences between the residents may be expressed only in terms of seniority, sex, occupation and the like.

Affinal interests are many and various. Morton-Williams stresses the political importance for high-ranking men to take many wives in order to set up a wide network of alliances (1967:52), while Lloyd comments that men seeking to create or strengthen a relationship with a wealthy and powerful man will

"gladly give him their daughters in marriage" (1974:43). Indeed, giving daughters in marriage to another man was viewed by the Yoruba as the greatest expression of friendship and goodwill, as epitomised in the adage eni fun ni l'omo pari oore ("one who offers his daughter in marriage to another performs the highest act of kindness"). It will be recalled how Alaafin Atiba gave an Oyo princess in marriage to Sabiganna Edunjobi, thus establishing an enduring affinal link of loyalty between the royal houses. In the histories of other chiefly lineages in Iganna (as for instance those of Akiniku, Ago Ogundare and Jagun) the same strategy was resorted to in order to cement the bond of loyalty between the first settlers and the king.

The practice of sending young children to live with their maternal kin often followed explicit requests on the part of the maternal kin. It was customary; even after the bride-price payments were completed, for the bride's parents to continue making demands on their son-in-law (Fadipe 1970:73-77, 128); taking custody of the daughter's firstborn was viewed almost as a right by them. As informants would often say, elèran l'o l'akobi ("the owner of the animal receives its firstborn"). Such is indeed the rule with regard to cattle owned by Igannans and herded by the local Fulani pastoralists: the first calf born belongs to the owner of the cow, and only the second can be appropriated by the Fulani.

A married woman living in her husband's compound might also try to arrange for one of her sons to go and live with her kin. Since women married earlier than men they often survived their husbands, and when widowed many preferred to return to their natal agbole where they could be more independent than in their affinal homes. Thus sending their sons to settle with their maternal kin was a well worked out strategy akin to an old age pension scheme.

The structure of agbole government was very like that of town government. The head of the agbole, referred to as baale, was in theory the most senior male descendant of the agbole's



founder. In agbole of chiefly lineages the offices of chief and baale were not necessarily held by the same person. Often, in fact, agbole members preferred to keep the offices separate, since the chief's primary concern was with his quarter and the town as a whole, while the baale's was with the agbole only. Just as the council of chiefs advised the oba so did the baale deliberate over the affairs of his people with other agbole elders. In town affairs the baale alone would represent the entire agbole. It was his responsibility to raise the tribute levied on his people and to recruit the men required for public works or military purposes (Fadipe 1970:109).

In the execution of all this business the identity of the agbole and the unity of its members were conceived of in terms of its core idile, even though individuals or sub-lineages who were not agnatically related to this core might in certain other situations manifest their true agnatic idile identity. This might happen at the time of orisa festivals, funerals or celebrations, or in relation to chieftaincy matters. So while the agbole was a primary unit of political organisation in the town, the overriding ideology identified with this unit was that of idile membership. But as I have tried to show in the course of this discussion people did not rigorously and exclusively adhere to their agnatic idile; strong identity with maternal or even affinal idile was on occasions also exhibited.

## 2.24 Discussion

In concluding this discussion of the extended kin-based groupings identified as agbole and idile I should stress again that the unity of these groups was realised not at the level of production but at the level of political organisation and ideology. The basic cooperative unit in agricultural production was established only at the much narrower level of the household. Within the household itself several sub-units of production could be identified, such as those of unmarried sons who engaged in part-time farming on their own plots, and those of wives who practised a craft or trade of their own.

It was through these primary productive units that individuals could assert their relative autonomy, their power of decision-making and their control over others. The units varied in size and importance, ranging from the small farmer's family household to the slave-staffed households of the great nineteenth century warlords. Further, they were conceived of as unilineal descent groups (or segments of these), and processes of fission (such as those initiated by men settling down with their maternal kin) were expressed in genealogical terms. But to conclude from this that the traditional social organisation of Yoruba domestic groups can therefore be explained in terms of segmentary lineage theory, as Schwab (1965) suggests, is to miss the point of the data discussed so far<sup>22</sup>.

In the first place, although the household and the agbole were conceptualised as minor and major segments of one idile such localised groups in actual fact straddled various idile; consequently processes of group formation and articulation were not determined simply by lineage principles, but were just as much the outcome of decision-making processes by individuals or groups (though admittedly their actions would be rationalised or legitimised by reference to lineage ideology and custom). Secondly, lineage theory by itself is unable to account for the development of inequalities in size and importance between households, or how the conditions which give rise to these inequalities were reproduced. Yoruba lineages, as Lloyd has rightly observed, lacked any formal ranking order (1974:34). Distinctions between aristocratic and commoner lineages so prevalent in other African kingdoms (as Ankole, Rwanda, Nyoro and Dahomey) were absent among the Yoruba. On the other hand Yoruba kingdoms exhibited elaborate structures of ranked status positions: those of king, major and minor chiefs, ilari, ogboni, freeborn and slaves. But while status positions could be institutionalised by becoming vested in specific idile, ranking orders were always subject to change; although individuals who carved out power-wealth positions for themselves would often be given ranked office, this was by no means automatic. Hence Yoruba systems of social organisation and stratification cannot be explained



adequately by deduction from the formal structures of unilineal descent groups, or the formal structure of centralised government as typified by the system of hierarchically ordered offices with their corresponding bundles of rights and duties.

The important question at issue, therefore, is to investigate the nature of the economic base underlying these social inequalities. How could certain individuals emerge as wealthy-powerful? What resources did they control? What control did they exert over production and labour power in a society where production for wealth depended on collective labour? How did they proceed to establish large households and surround themselves with dependants and followers? Why did so many not succeed in these pursuits, entering instead into relations of dependence on others? It is around these questions that the remaining part of this analysis will centre. Having discussed already the basic labour pool constituted by the household personnel, I shall now look at the sources of extra-labour that existed in Iganna.

### 2.3 The extra-labour pool

Under this heading I shall discuss four sources of extra-labour: organised working parties (aaro and owe), slaves, iwofa, and clientage.

#### 2.31 Reciprocal working parties (aaro)

Farmers often pooled their labour resources together for mutual aid when there was much work. The aaro was an association (with officers, closure, procedures etc.) which organised farmers into working parties which worked on the members' farms equally and in rotation (Fadipe 1970:150; Ojo 1966:60). Small farmers profited particularly by joining an aaro. Tasks which were too taxing or time consuming for one man (such as clearing new plots in the bush) would be accomplished in a single day by twenty or thirty men. The host then had the duty to provide food for the whole party.

### 2.32 Ad hoc working parties (owe)

Anyone who had work requiring a large labour force could call an ad hoc working party. The owe drew on the labour of all the members of the initiator's agbole, as well as the agbole of his in-laws and friends. It was an informal gathering, and whether the task was work on a farm or building a house in the town, it was organised in a festive atmosphere. Food and drink would be provided in large quantities, not only for the workers but also for the many elders, chiefs, musicians and well-wishers who happened to turn up. Hence calling an owe was an expensive affair, albeit one by which the organiser could get a lot of work done and enhance his public image in the community<sup>23</sup>.

### 2.33 Slaves (eru)

No figures are available for the slave population in Iganna at any time in history. Before the nineteenth century the Sabiganna and the chiefs seem to have been the principal slave owners, since their political status gave them better access to outside resources through trade and warfare. One of the early Sabiganna is remembered by present-day Igannans for his involvement in the slave trade, and especially for his alleged cruelty in selling some of his own people as slaves<sup>24</sup>.

In the nineteenth century when warfare and slave raiding was rife throughout Yorubaland it "became everybody's ambition to own a slave" (Oroge 1971:167). A clear distinction between households operating largely on slave labour and those operating exclusively on family labour could no longer be made as a number of households of the intermediate type developed, each with a small number of slaves (ibid.:180).

Though the subject of slavery is hard to investigate nowadays (since nobody wants to be reminded of a slave origin), from elderly informants' comments it was made clear to me that by the end of the nineteenth century there was a large slave population in Iganna. The largest slave owners were then the war chiefs Balogun and Jagun, the Sabiganna, and some of the major chiefs such as Bada, Agbakin, Basipa and Bale-Aiyede.



Many commoners also owned slaves. With the exception of the war chiefs', most slaves in Iganna seem to have been acquired through purchase rather than capture. The major slave market for Igannans at the end of the last century was Save<sup>25</sup>.

Male slaves worked mainly on the farms. According to Fadipe the majority of slaves was not worked to full capacity. In Ibadan, for instance, slaves would work on their master's farm only until about eleven-thirty in the morning, when they were free to turn to their own farms (1970:182, 184). Oroge concurs with this, adding that some masters would give one to three days off to their slaves so that they could work for themselves (1971:199-200).

Female slaves engaged in the same tasks as free women. Often they would be sent on trading expeditions to distant markets, but while at home they would assist the master's wives (Fadipe 1970:182). They also engaged in occupations of their own so as to be self-supporting. Sick or ageing slaves usually remained in their master's household where they were looked after.

The fact that slave owners did not attempt to tap the labour resources of their slaves to full capacity has two important implications for production. Firstly, the slave became responsible for maintaining himself and his family. Secondly, in situations where intensity of work fluctuated (as in farming and warfare) the slave's self-sufficiency meant that he could provide a permanent source of extra-labour which the master could call on or lay off as the need arose, without thereby losing him.

Slaves and their offspring stayed on in their master's house after his death, either as emancipated full members of the household or as eru idile ("slave of the lineage"). In the latter case they were corporately owned by the lineage and could only be sold by a joint decision of members of the idile (Oroge 1971: 136, 142).

Because of this process of gradual absorption of slaves into the native population men ambitious to build up a large household

could not depend on inherited slaves but had to acquire new ones of their own. These newly-acquired slaves, young and not yet absorbed into the household as members, could most efficiently be exploited by their masters.

Another important facet of slave-owning was how it enhanced a person's public image. For high-ranking, politically important and wealthy men a following of slaves was an indispensable symbol of their status, no matter how productive or unproductive the slaves were as labourers.

The slave-master relationship was conceptualised as being analogous to the debtor-creditor relationship, and slave labour was thus justified. Oroge records that even as late as 1916, after the British Administration had formally abolished the legal status of slavery, domestic slaves intending to assert their freedom continued to insist on the payment of the official redemption fee of £3.15s to their masters; this to the amazement of the colonial officers. But for the Yoruba it was commonsense that after losing slave status the slave remained indebted to his or her purchaser. Thus most of the remaining slaves drifted into the category of iwofa (see below) and continued to serve their masters until they earned the money to redeem themselves.

#### 2.34 Iwofa (debt-labourers or pawns)

An iwofa was a person who rendered services to a moneylender in lieu of surety and interest on a loan. The iwofa was not necessarily the debtor but could be a substitute or pawn (male or female, child or adult). Slaves too could be pawned as iwofa by their masters.

That the practice of rendering iwofa labour was institutionalised as a legal transaction in Old Oyo was witnessed by the Lander brothers (R. & J. Lander, 1830). Johnson further specifies that the transaction involved the following parties:

1. the olowo (creditor or moneylender; literally, "the person who owns money");
2. the onigbowo (guarantor, witness, sponsor);
3. the onigbese-oniya'wo (debtor-borrower); and
4. the iwofa (see Johnson 1921:127).



Though 3 and 4 could be the same person, more often the debtor would send a substitute. For this reasons the iwofa institution has often been referred to as a type of peonage. On entering into the contract the moneylender could neither fix a time for repayment nor demand interest; he could only specify the type of service-labour expected from the borrower or his pawn. The obligation to render these services lapsed as soon as the borrower returned the initial loan.

While slaves were recruited from outside (purchased or captured), iwofa were essentially insiders to the local community whose recruitment was directly related to the ongoing credit-debt transactions between townspeople. This is not to say that people resorted to the iwofa institution whenever they were short of cash; traders and craft specialists usually gave credit, and small sums of money could often be raised by calling on the goodwill of relatives and friends. Thus it was usually when large sums were needed that iwofa transactions were entered into. These occasions included the imposition of heavy fines on individuals for offences committed (Fadipe 1970:189); imposition of purification rituals on individuals struck by a calamity for which an orisa had to be placated (as, for example, placating Sango after an individual or a house had been struck by lightning - see Johnson 1921:25-6); initiation into the Ifa cult (Itefa) or some other orisa society; payment of brideprice and expenses of wedding celebrations. But by far the most frequent cause for indebtedness was the lavish expenditure accompanying funeral celebrations for parents (Johnson 1921:129; Fadipe 1970:189). The first celebrations, which lasted for up to eight days in Iganna, occurred at the burial ceremony (oku sise). At a later date (which could be many years after) more elaborate and expensive commemorative celebrations (oku sisin) would be held.

The type and amount of labour expected of the iwofa depended on the iwofa's sex and age. An adult male iwofa lived on his own agbole and usually worked on the creditor's farm once or twice in four days. The amount of work was usually measured by the number of mounds cleared (mounds in which seeds are planted are

spaced out at distances of two to three feet along parallel rows - see chapter IV). Johnson says that the iwofa had to clear only a hundred mounds every four days (1921:127), while Fadipe estimates the higher figure of 160 mounds daily, that is a total of 320 in four days (as he found that the iwofa usually worked twice "weekly", a week representing four days in Yoruba counting). For large loans the iwofa might be required to work three days out of four (1970:190).

The discrepancy between the figures provided by these two eminent Yoruba scholars may be due partly to regional variations and partly, I suspect, to the time lag between their writings. Johnson wrote before the end of the nineteenth century when the external trade in farm produce in most rural communities was virtually nil, while Fadipe did his research in the 1930s, when the big farmers who produced crops for the newly developing urban areas had risen to prominence. As I shall point out in the following chapter, domestic slavery had at that time been phased out and iwofa labour was thriving as never before.

The iwofa usually worked on the olowo's farm between six and eleven a.m. The traditional daily output of a Yoruba farmer has been estimated as the clearing of on average 300 mounds (Johnson 1921:127). Depending on a man's physical strength and incentive this figure could easily be exceeded. Nowadays the agatu (see chapter IV) often clear as many as 600 in one day.

Married women entered into iwofa transactions less commonly. On the occasions when they did enter such a transaction they would usually pawn one of their daughters, or if that was not possible they sometimes agreed to pay the moneylender a specified amount from their own earnings in lieu of their labour (Fadipe 1970:190). This was already approaching the present-day system of paying interest on loans.

Unmarried women who had been pawned as iwofa lived in the creditor's house, usually helping the women in household chores. At the same time they would continue with their own work in their spare time. Some were engaged in trade; they would sell



their master's articles and bring him the proceeds which would count as allotted services rendered<sup>26</sup>.

Children pawned as iwofa also lived in the olowo's house. Boys usually tended horses and ran errands, while girls helped the housewives in domestic affairs (Johnson 1921:129). Often children were taught professional skills when serving with a craft specialist or trader, so parents tended to consider peonage with such specialists beneficial for their children in the long run. Johnson goes as far as to say that

...a chief or a well-to-do gentleman with a wild unruly son whom he wished to tame, or who was indulged at home, would also resort to this method for training and discipline... (ibid.:130).

These comments notwithstanding, the iwofa institution offered much scope for exploitation, especially where children and unmarried women were concerned (see Fadipe 1970:191-3). The relative lack of freedom for children who had to be at their master's beck and call; the paucity of opportunities for play and recreation; their deprivation of the care and attention of their own relatives; all this often made peonage very harsh for children, and consequently truancy was not infrequent. But the core of the exploitativeness of the iwofa institution was to be found in its open-endedness: no time limit for the repayment of debts was set. Thus debts often remained outstanding for years on end, with the result that children were left in peonage until well into adulthood. Hence the proverbial saying a ti gbagbe ni s'oko olowo ("to be forgotten in the creditor's farm"; Fadipe 1970:193). Impecunious farmers often pawned their daughters whose labour did not benefit them on the farm as their sons' did. Thus it was the plight of many girls to have to wait for their fiancés to pay their redemption money in lieu of brideprice (ibid.). But often these young men had to borrow from Peter to pay Paul, so a new debt was created in the place of the old. Delano gives an illustration of how this would come about. A man he knew had borrowed money to pay brideprice for his wife. He did not do debt-labour himself but waited until his first child, a girl, was old enough to be pawned. Then he left her in peonage until a suitor came to redeem her (1937:71).

Thus young people were at the mercy of their parents and elders, who could send them into peonage at any time; once in that position there was legally nothing they could do to redeem themselves. In Iganna this type of exploitation has, as I shall argue below, precipitated both the outmigration of young people in the post World War 2 period and the iwofa institution's own demise.

The labour potential of iwofa, as of slaves, was not fully tapped, for the same reasons. The iwofa, too, maintained him or herself, and tended to look on the olowo as a generous parent. What in fact happened was that the olowo increased his production, replenished his wealth, and he and his idile grew in stature<sup>27</sup> as a result of their ownership of iwofa, while the opposite happened to the debtor: production on his own farm fell off, putting back the time by which the debt could be repaid.

### 2.35 Clientage

Patron-client relationships were pervasive in Yoruba society. Though the king, the chiefs and the well-to-do in general were invariably called upon for patronage, there was no rigid stratification into patrons and clients (see Lloyd 1974:25-6). Asymmetrical relationships, in which favour-seekers approached others for help, were to be found in all levels of social interaction. A person called upon for assistance might be referred to as oluranlowo ("one who lends a helping hand") or alafehinti ("one one whom one rests one's back") (ibid.:51). There was no specific term for "client", but someone acting as patron might refer to his protégé in such terms as omo ehin mi ("my follower") or omo l'aju mi ("my favourite", "my protégé").

As there were always many people requiring helpers (whether as a protection against enemies, in litigations, or just for personal advancement), a patron of one man might stand in a client-like relationship to another of higher rank. Also, a person seeking help did not have to be confined to one oluranlowo, but might approach several. The approach was made by explaining one's case to the prospective helper and "begging" for help (toro iranlowo; b'ebe). Often begging was accompanied (overtly or covertly) by gifts of money or in kind, or by services, but



always by a display of gratitude and loyalty. This was no different from the way votaries approached their orisa and ancestors. The idiom of address was also the same: the patron, ancestor or orisa was usually baba or iya (father or mother), while the favour-seekers humbly referred to themselves as omo re ("your child").

The buying of goodwill (by begging, praising, bribing or serving) was not only a one way traffic upwards; for the high-ranking this relationship of patron-client was the customary way of tying or obligating to them the loyal supporters so necessary for the maintenance of their elevated positions and the success of their political interventions<sup>28</sup>. Though analytically distinct from direct producers such as slaves and iwofa, clients stood in a similar relationship of personal indebtedness and obligation to the same high-ranking individuals who, as well as granting "favours", were also using their wealth-power in the community to acquire slaves and to give loans. Consequently, immaterial of whether clients rendered actual labour service to their patrons, they could not fail but reproduce the patrons' position of domination in the town.

#### 2.4 Tributes, markets and trade

So far I have tried to analyse Iganna's pre-colonial social organisation by concentrating on the social relations underpinning production at the level of the individual households. By extending this analysis to the various ways in which extra-labour could be recruited, social inequality was shown to be closely related to individuals' differential access to labour resources, both as a means for increasing production and as providing an entry into relations of dominance/dependence. In order to shed more light on these processes of stratification I shall now focus on the flow of produce beyond the level of household consumption, and on external trade, and discuss the ways in which these activities were organised.

## 2.41 Tributes and levies

It was the king's prerogative in Iganna, as elsewhere in Yorubaland, to appropriate part of the people's produce through levies and to call on their services. Quarter chiefs, baale and even orisa cult societies could also exact levies and services from the people. At the toll gates on entering the town everybody bringing in loads of farm produce was levied small contributions by the gatemen (onibode). These levies were divided between the chiefs who had custody of the gates and the oba for the maintenance of his palace staff (Johnson 1921:91-2; Oroge 1971:95).

The collection of tribute within Iganna itself was organised by the baale who, after keeping back their entitlement, would present their agbole's quota to their quarter chiefs. The quarter chiefs would then present it to the Sabiganna. On special occasions tribute was paid to the Alaafin of Oyo. The beere festival, which took place biennially in the dry season (around February), was one such occasion when the provincial kings would go to Oyo in order to show obeisance to the Alaafin and to present him with the tribute of their subjects (Johnson 1921:49)<sup>29</sup>.

From informants' statements it was gathered that the total amount of crops given in levies (tribute, tolls and contributions for feasts) constituted a very minor part of the farmer's total production. Similarly, the time he spent on corvée labour (as, for instance, building the town walls) was minimal viewed over a whole year, and certainly did not jeopardise his own production. Indeed, it was not the custom of Yoruba kings to appropriate systematically the bulk of their people's produce; neither did the pre-colonial social system lend itself to direct appropriation of the people's labour by those in authority. Rather, the aim of the tributes was to assert the rulers' authority and control over their subjects' productivity. Much of what the king and chiefs received in tributes was in fact redistributed at the occasion of festivals for their ancestors and orisa; as the townspeople would say, "unless the Sabiganna celebrates the Egungun", or "unless he celebrates Iyante, things will not be good in Iganna". For the orisa were viewed as the ultimate source of fertility and prosperity. Thus through such a show



of liberality authority was legitimised and the unity of the town reasserted. For the accumulation of wealth, on the other hand, the king depended on his palace staff of slaves, clients and iwofa, who plied the trade routes, laboured on his farms and fought his wars (Oroge 1971:162 passim; Hales 1968: Oyo mission report - notes on Alaafin).

## 2.42 Cashcropping and trade

Market transactions and the circulation of shell money were part of the economy in the Oyo kingdom. Apart from the king's daily market (oja oba) in front of the palace a number of markets sprang up in various quarters as Iganna grew in size. Money was used not only in the purchase of various commodities (both locally produced and circulated through the external trade) but also in the payment of bridewealth and fines, for the services of ritual specialists and for the cost of funerals and other feasts. Since most people lived off the land, marketing crops was their major means of obtaining cash. In pre-colonial times, however, this market flow of food crops was restricted to the town and its environs; not only was farm produce too heavy and bulky to be easily included in the long distance trade, but, as Fadipe remarks, "...each area produced what other areas produced, hence there was very little room for external trade" (1970:165). Thus cash cropping offered little scope for high money returns, especially for the small farmer.

Trade, where the largest fortunes were made (Lloyd 1974:41), provided a most lucrative investment when undertaken on a large scale (that is, inter-town and long distance). It cannot be thought, however, that the many petty traders operating with tiny capital assets, and especially the market women who combined their household tasks with a bit of retailing in the morning or evening markets, fell within this lucrative bracket.

The external trade included, in addition to slaves and locally manufactured goods (such as indigo dye, shea butter and cloth), many imported goods from Europe (such as salt, flint guns and gin - see, among others, R. & J. Lander, 1830). Apart from the independent merchants there were many traders in the service of

their king, chiefs or wealthy sponsors who provided the trading capital, headportage and sometimes bodyguards. These traders, often slaves or clients, might be receiving commission on their sales and doing some part time trading on their own account (Fadipe 1970:182).

Their work being hazardous as well as physically taxing, full-time traders led a very unsettled life. But at the same time, supply and demand for market goods being more predictable than the vagaries of the agricultural cycle, they were in a much better position to accumulate wealth than the home-based farmer, besieged by domestic pressures. Moreover, successful traders could use their accumulated wealth and experience as an entrée into the political arena of the hometown, and after acceding to chiefly office continue to be involved in the external trade through their representatives. (See, for instance, the case of Alaafin Abiodun in Law, 1977:236; or, from my own fieldwork, the case of Adedokun, founder of the Balaguna lineage in Iganna).

A clear distinction was made between the sale of locally produced goods, especially farm produce, and trade properly speaking. People who bought goods and sold them at a profit, not having actually produced them themselves, were called onisowo, and their activities referred to as sowo ("to do, practise trade"). People who produced goods themselves, such as farmers and craftspeople, were not called onisowo when they sold their products, nor was the woman who sold her husband's crops in the market since she acted only as the producer's agent; such sales were simply referred to as ta oja (or taja - "to sell 'market'", i.e. "goods"). Hence the term oloja for "market people".

This distinction is not a mere linguistic quibble but refers to an actual differentiation between farmer-producers and their dependants (co-producers) in pre-colonial agricultural production. Although farm produce was then, as today, partly sold for cash, the fact that it did not circulate in the external long distance trade meant that the farmer could control his co-producers as well as the allocation of the produce. Co-producers were household dependants, slaves and iwofa, all of whom laboured because



they were personally tied to the farmer-producer. As for the produce, the farmer could use it for household consumption, give it away as tribute, or sell it for cash through one of his dependants. This transaction would be viewed as taja ("marketing"), not sowo ("trading"). With the present-day increase in production geared to the city markets, however, the changes within production have been more than merely quantitative, or the result of some extraneous factor referred to by Bohannan and Dalton (1962) as the "domination of the market principle". The Iganna farmer must now rely on co-producers who are no longer his dependants (being instead hired labourers), and by alienating his produce to onisowo (women traders other than his wife) long before it is sold to the consumer he forfeits his control over it. The radical break with the past implied in this shift in the productive relations (which I shall discuss more fully in chapter VII) has received scant attention in the extensive literature on change in Yoruba society. Yet it was the Iganna elders who first made me aware of it, while explaining what made cashcropping today different from what it was in the past. "Before we used to market (ta) our crops. Nowadays they are sold by traders (onisowo)". The transition from simple commodity circulation to complex mercantilist circulation had been completed.

## 2.5 Lineage ideology and relations of subordination-indebtedness

In the lines of Bourdieu's model, I have so far tried to demonstrate how the accumulation of wealth-power could make "capital go to capital" (1977:178-181). Now I shall take the analysis a little further and show where the interconvertibility of capital - i.e. from symbolic into material and vice versa - breaks down. Bourdieu indeed says that symbolic capital is in material terms very expensive to exhibit (ibid.:181). But from the way this expenditure is reimbursed in the case of the rich we see that the interconvertibility which is a relation between the two forms of capital must also be mediated by a relation between kinds of individuals in structurally differing socio-economic positions. It is these positions which determine whose (material)

capital should go to whose (symbolic) capital and whether the exhibition of a particular individual's symbolic capital should merely lead to material indebtedness. Thus this becomes a way of talking about social stratification.

In Iganna every idile had its store of symbolic capital consisting of renown, prestige and prosperity, which had to be constantly exhibited and maintained. People capitalised on the achievements of their forebears; the land on which they had settled and farmed, the wars they had fought, their skills, the number of dependants they had had, the name they had made for themselves in the town; also on their orisa, who had allowed them to prosper. All this was expressed and reiterated in the oriki-orile praise chants through which idile members (both ancestral and living) were honoured on every important occasion (see Adeoye 1972:41, 58-9)<sup>30</sup>. The prestige of the idile was further associated with the legitimation of the authority upon which social solidarity within the households and the society at large depended. Authority devolved from the ancestors and their orisa upon the king, chiefs, baale, elders, and so on down to parents. Cases of misfortune (e.g. barrenness in women, sickness or premature death) were often interpreted by the babalawo (after consultation with the Ifa oracle) as acts of the angered idile orisa or ancestors in response to disobedience or neglect. Power over life and death, power to bless or punish - these were vested in the supernatural world of the idile ancestors and their orisa. Ideologically, these spiritual beings were viewed as the true source of "capital" (prosperity-well-being) which they might extend as help ("credit") to those whom they wished to bless, or withhold from those they wished to punish.

As among the various idile there was more or less assumed equality (at least to the extent that they were not ranked<sup>31</sup> - see Lloyd 1974:34), this symbolic capital in which all its members shared corporately had to be upheld by each one of them, the poor as well as the rich. In their attempts to secure the reproduction of this symbolic capital (through feasting the dead, becoming initiated into the orisa cults etc.) the poor often had to borrow from the wealthy or "buy" their patronage. This involved

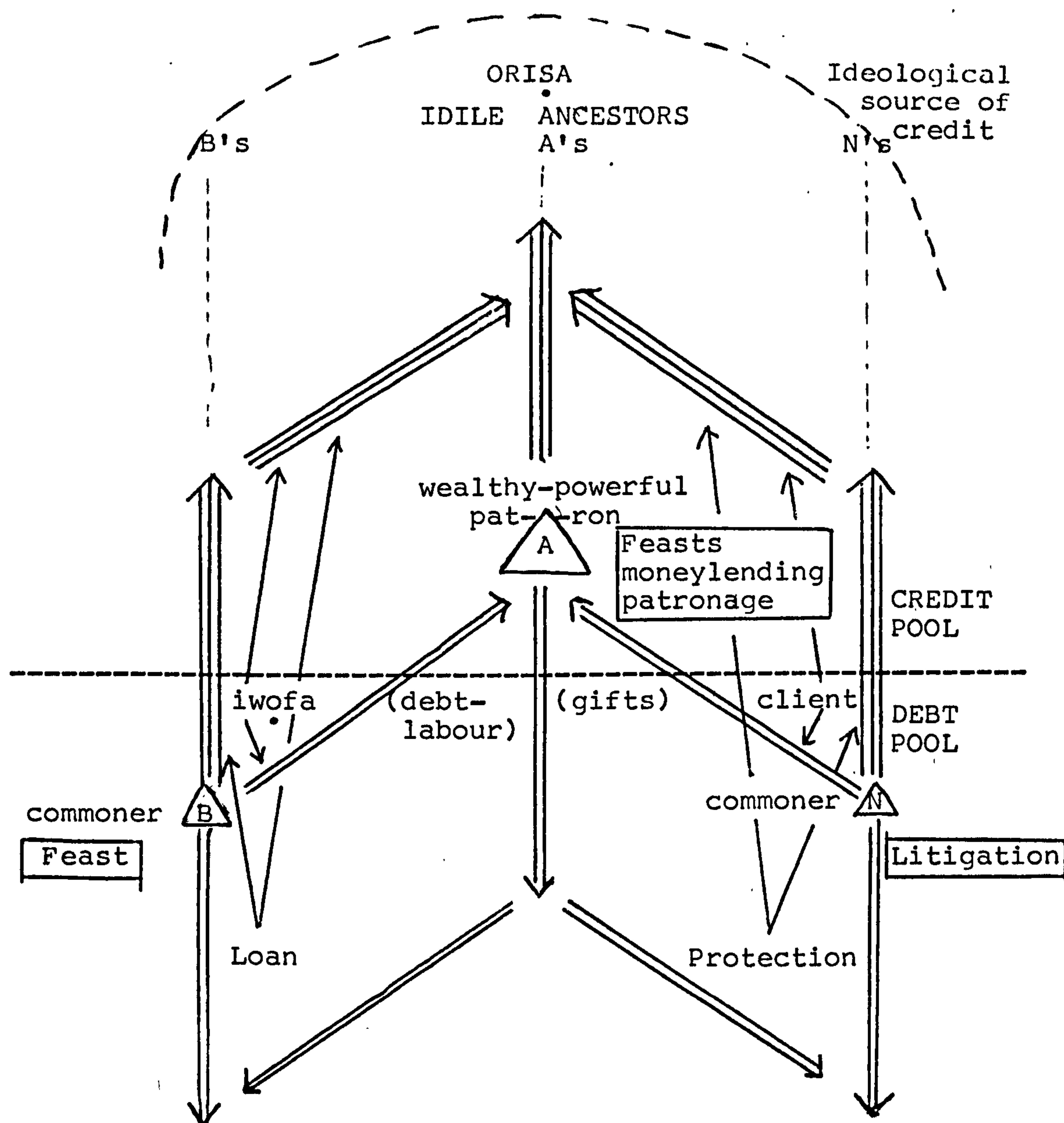


entering into relations of indebtedness with the credit-controllers who would then dominate the transactions whereby their labour was appropriated or their loyalty-clientship secured. Hence while capital went to capital in the case of the wealthy-powerful, this was possible only because of a very different process in the case of those who lacked the material capital needed to uphold the symbolic capital of renown attached to their idile.

In conclusion, then, I would stress that in pre-colonial Yoruba communities the polarisation between those who controlled the circulation of material capital and those who (intermittently) depended on it did not presuppose the existence of concrete social strata or classes. On the contrary, it was the absence of such strata, predicated by the absence of idile ranking, which enabled the wealthy-powerful to offer their capital as credit to those forced by the exigencies of idile ideology to enter into relations of indebtedness.

## 2.6 Diagrammatic summary

In order to summarise this analysis of the pre-colonial modes of domination and the circulation of capital as credit and as debt, figure 4 shows how initially material and symbolic capital move in opposite directions. The person who desired (or was socially compelled) to accumulate or maintain his personal and his idile's symbolic capital of renown and prestige had to spend material capital. The polarisation between debtors and creditors (represented by the dotted line dividing the credit pool from the debt pool) developed as the surplus material capital which the small farmers B &...., N accumulated became appropriated by the wealthy-powerful patron-moneylender A, who initially provided B &...., N with assistance but then left them in a relation of indebtedness (as iwofa or clients). Unlike the "debt" cases of B &...., N, the case of A resulted in credit when the capital he spent on loans and patronage returned to him augmented by the labour and support of those he had "helped". The idile ancestors and their orisa ultimately act as a moral safeguard and source of all accumulated capital.



## KEY

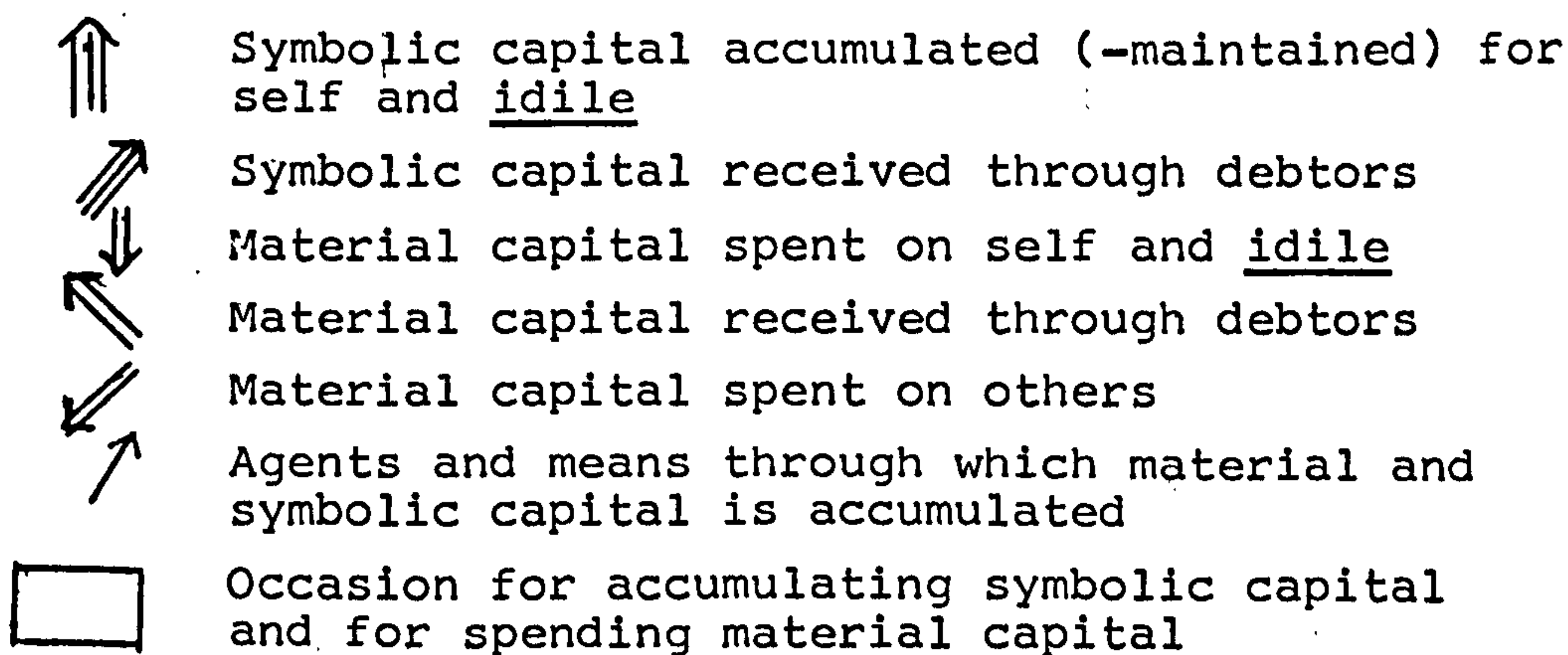


Figure 5      Process of polarisation between controllers  
of credit and those who depend on it



### 3. Conclusions: what made for continuity and change?

In the preceding section I have attempted to outline a model of how traditional forms of social solidarity ultimately depended on the setting up of relations of credit/indebtedness. The functioning of such a model, however, is dependent on a number of socio-cultural factors, both within and without the local town-community, to which I shall refer as the "societal prerequisites". I shall now consider some of the societal prerequisites most necessary for the reproduction of these modes of domination (or relations of production). At the same time the inbuilt weaknesses of the system of production, its conflict areas, the weakest links where total breakdown followed by social reorganisation is most likely to occur, will be probed.

#### 3.1 The relative isolation of the rural town

In modern societies individuals may be natives of one locality, reside in another and make a living in yet a third. This mobility was not usually possible in pre-colonial Yoruba towns, where prolonged residence resulted in the establishment of a personal bond of loyalty between the oba and the settler, who would then be allocated farm land and land in the town, thus establishing a patrimony which his descendants would continue to hold corporately (Fadipe 1970:173-8). Fears of marauders and kidnappers outside the town boundaries helped to tie people to their home locality, but the dependence on agricultural production was the major factor discouraging excessive mobility. The relatively low level of farming technology; the system of household smallholdings; the agricultural cycle which required labour intensive periods; the absence of an external market for farm produce; all this meant that access to external resources was to a large extent limited to those who had the personnel to engage in trade or warfare. The historical account of pre-colonial Iganna has already illustrated how the big scramble for slaves and booty in the nineteenth century pitted war chiefs against the established order of authority vested in the oba and the council of chiefs. Yet throughout these days of turbulent change the

ordinary people continued to live off the land; while the war-rich, on their return home, would seek chiefly office, thus reverting to "traditional" ways of legitimising their wealth by allowing their assets to circulate as credit within the community<sup>32</sup>.

### 3.2 The farmer's control over his coproducers and the allocation of his produce

As this point has already been discussed, here I shall simply reiterate that it was the limited circulation of farm produce and the virtual absence of middle trade in staple crops in pre-colonial times which enabled the farmer to exert this control. Moreover farm produce was not really viewed as a trading commodity. Crops were products of the land on which labour had been expended; but neither land nor labour had market value, since land could not be sold or labour power or time bought. Thus the real cost of labour (being the cost of maintaining and reproducing the labourer) remained socially disguised, while control over dependants' productivity was secured by the social relation of obligation-indebtedness. This relation also allowed the dependant to be given in marriage or pawned as iwofa; all these were mechanisms by means of which the modes of domination functioned within the community.

### 3.3 Self-emancipation and conflict

The point was made earlier that those who stood in subordinate positions (wives, young people, slaves, iwofa) were allowed, if not expected, to produce or do business on their own account. This custom was fraught with ambiguities and dilemmas for those in authority. The man who showed himself too affable and ready to help his dependants not only ran the risk of losing their labour too soon, but also of undermining his own position by aiding and abetting competition; on the other hand, if dependants' scope for self-emancipation were too obviously curtailed, the risk of loss of loyalty or even desertion and rebellion would be



incurred. Such instances abound in the histories of Yoruba towns. It is this strategy of affability and generosity towards dependants, tinged with sufficient firmness so that they many not attempt to rise above their station, that Bourdieu has termed "gentle" or "hidden exploitation" (1977:192-3).

Anthropological studies have for long accorded great importance to conflict. In his seminal studies of conflict in African societies Gluckman argued that

custom in Africa emphasises conflicts in certain ranges of social relationships and yet establishes cohesion in the wider society or over a longer period of time (1956:109; but see also 1954).

Areas of conflict in Yoruba society were expressed in witchcraft beliefs and accusations, chieftaincy succession contests, licence in ritual, and so on. Yet there was no evidence to assume, as structural-functionalism would have us do, that those areas of conflict were self-regulated by custom within an over-all integrated and equilibrated social system in which the actors may change but the structures remain unless tampered with by external factors. No doubt African societies did institutionalise patterns of interaction which, having been set in motion, developed an impetus of their own, and as such were able to cushion built-in tensions and conflicts. This vast corpus of traditons, norms, sentiments and cultural heritage amassed by successive generations could indeed develop strong self-regulating mechanisms for securing continuity over long periods. In this sense one might rightly assume that the lives of the members of a society were largely moulded by and integrated into the prevailing system by force of custom. However, in explaining the integration of conflict in the social system by reference to the force of custom, or to established norms such as the lineage principle, one only begs the question, namely, what causes the custom to exist and to be maintained in the first place (leaving aside the elusive question of the origin of the custom which in traditional societies is often explained by a just-so story or myth). It is for this reason that throughout this chapter, and the thesis itself, my main concern has been to lay bare the modes of domination and account for social cohesion by reference to the ability and opportunity of those in authority to control access to external

resources and to reproduce the relations of indebtedness with their dependants. Such equilibrium in Yoruba society was however very precarious, since the system enabled and even enticed dependent co-producers to produce independently of their "creditors". Therefore, once successful upstarts became economically too independent the system had to either eliminate them or legitimise their capital as a source of credit in the community. Failing these alternatives the equilibrium - that is, the status quo - was itself in jeopardy and liable to overthrow, as has been witnessed in modern developments. Keeping in mind these modern developments, I shall now conclude this chapter by discussing briefly the relatively inarticulate and ambiguous position of women and young people in the traditional system of production.

### 3.31 Sexual antagonisms: the subordination of women

In the political domain positions of authority were usually vested in men. Women, it is true, could occupy positions of high rank, as for example senior wives (iyale) in the household and agbole, priestess (iya Sango, iya Olorisa-oko) in cult societies, or even incumbents of the chiefly offices of iyalode and iyaloja in the town government; yet at every echelon there were men holding positions over them. In agricultural production the work of planting and growing crops which was performed by men was rated more highly than the processing and marketing of crops, which was women's work. Male occupations were in general considered more important than female ones. In the realm of kinship, men and their kin were thought to be the true owners of their wives' offspring; furthermore, it was the men who gave their daughters in marriage and appropriated the brideprice. In the religious domain men also held the most exalted positions, as diviners and performers of sacrifices for the prosperity and reproduction of the community.

But since women's roles in the society were nevertheless indispensable, the antagonisms engendered by these sexual divisions were revealed mainly in men's fears of being either let down or outdone by their womenfolk. When they appropriated the productive output of their wives (both their children and agricultural



products, on which they had expended time and labour) men feared that this enforced alienation from their products might cause the women to sabotage their (the men's) activities (although such fears were not always consciously acknowledged). On the other hand, when they allowed their wives a degree of independence to pursue their own occupations, they feared them as possible competitors in the accumulation of material capital which would allow them to become creditors in the community, and thus their rivals in the pursuit of power.

Though I shall elaborate later on these antagonisms, I would now point to their well-foundedness, given the prevailing relations of domination. Moreover, because women were not tied to the land in the way that the men as farmers were, but had the scope to engage in trade independently of their husbands, they also constituted a category of potential or actual merchant-entrepreneurs who could even gain access to material resources outside the local community, as has indeed been the case in modern times.

### 3.32 Who paid whose debts, who accumulated whose capital? Young people an exploited category?

Discussing the limited scope which householders allowed their dependants to accumulate a capital of their own, while appropriating the bulk of their labour output, I referred to this form of domination as "gentle exploitation". Within the system of agricultural production in pre-colonial Iganna, various conflicts between young people and parent-elders arose from relations of exploitation which often exceeded the limits of "gentleness", becoming overtly exploitative.

The conflict of interests between young men and their father-guardians was engendered primarily by the farmers' attempts to keep their sons as dependent co-producers in the household until the age of about thirty, although their capacity to produce independently had developed some ten years earlier (as can be seen today in the case of young migrants). Young men's attempts to settle with matrilinear kin was regarded by some informants as a strategy for escaping direct parental control in the old days.

Often parents delayed the granting of "independence" because of indebtedness, which in many cases meant that sons or daughters had been pawned to moneylenders for indefinite periods. These were the conditions responsible for the young people developing into a dissatisfied social category in modern times, opting for emigration to the cities as an alternative to exploitation at home.

The first part of the thesis came to the negative conclusion that the "quest for money" explanation was an inadequate one to account for the modern migration phenomenon in Iganna. The present chapter has yielded a more positive insight: that even though in pre-colonial Yorubaland the economy was becoming increasingly monetised Igannans did not live on material capital alone; not even the nineteenth century freebooters and war chiefs who stacked their stores with the spoils of war. Communities developed expensive life styles which inevitably meant that some members prospered while others ran into debt. But even the insolvent did not necessarily consider themselves losers; the approval of the community and the blessings of the orisa more than repaid their lavish expenditure in feasting the crowds to commemorate their ancestors. Their names had blazed a trail inasfar as their idile, the symbolic storehouse, gained repute.

The foregoing chapter has attempted to explain people's behaviour in the light of certain cultural values which have both symbolic and material aspects. For this analysis it is imperative that the relations of production at the base of complex social behaviour should be understood, as well as the forces transforming these relations in more recent times. This is the line of enquiry to be pursued in the remaining chapters.



## NOTES

1. The number of provinces was four, according to Johnson (1921: 68); three, according to Bowen (1858:xv); and six, according to Ajayi (1964:4), but as Morton-Williams notes, "neither their boundaries, nor their relationships to Oyo are adequately known" (1967:40).
2. Another historian has suggested a slightly earlier date for Obalokun's reign, namely the last decades of the sixteenth century (Akinjogbin 1967:11-2).
3. Information obtained through the kindness of the Onitile and chiefs of Itasa in 1974.
4. Unlike bale (uncrowned head-chiefs of towns), the Sabiganna is a crowned oba. His crown is called amijigi. It does not have the beaded fringe which conceals the face and is typical of the ade worn by his overlord the Alaafin. At his installation the Sabiganna receives from the Alaafin the sword and staff of Osanyin, the orisa through whom he installs his palace retainers known as ilari.
5. From the beginning the Igannans seem to have made a radical ideological break with their Save past. The annual cycle of major orisa festivals begins in August with the Egungun masquerades, and follows in close succession the order of corresponding festivals of the Oyo cycle. Two cults only came from Save, and these are minor in Iganna (those of Ara and Gelede). On the other hand the major annual festival of Iyanté, which the Sabiganna and his chiefs officially attend, is a Save cult brought to Iganna by nineteenth century refugees from chief Basipa's lineage after the destruction of Save by the Dahomeans.
6. Information obtained through kindness of the Bale Ikia of Iganna in 1974. This internecine war is also alluded to in the oriki of the Bale Aiyede of Iganna.
7. Sunsun and Tudi were sacked by the Dahomeans in the nineteenth century. Descendants of both these places later settled in Iganna, as did also those of Aiyede and other sacked towns in the area (see map 3).
8. Evidence supporting Fadipe's assertion can be found in the odu sites in many Yoruba towns. In these sites the founders of the settlements are said to have buried pots containing a magical substance (odu) which was believed to have the power of securing the prosperity and growth of the community and of attracting new settlers. In Inisha, a town near Oshogbo, for example, the annual opening ceremony of the Egungun festival takes place with a sacrifice to the orisa Osanyin performed at the site of the town's odu in the central market. In Iseyin an odu site is to be found in the king's market, near the three stones where according to tradition the founders first rested. (Information obtained in Inisha in 1968 and in Iseyin in 1972).
9. Unlike Johnson, who gives 1881 as the date for this Dahomean offensive (1921:454), the French missionaries' diaries indicate 1884 (Hales 1968).



10. According to Atanda there is no evidence to suggest that the Ogboni existed, let alone played a central role, in Old Oyo (1973:18). The prominent place of the Ogboni in Atibā's reconstituted Oyo would therefore seem to have been an innovation.
11. Famous Oyo titles conferred on settlers in Iganna from Old Oyo included Mogaji (from Isokun's lineage), (Ba)laguna, Alāpini, Ikolaḡa, and Gbonkā. Most other titles conferred on settlers hailing from various other towns were also modelled on the Oyo chieftaincies; as for instance those of Agbakin, (B)aṣipā, (Ba)samu and Akiniku (see Johnson 1921: 70), conferred on settlers from Buke (near Okeho), Save, Kewu (near Itasa), and Agba (near Iganna) respectively.
12. A number of such cults which came to Iganna were related to certain hills, as for instance the cults of oke ("hill") Agba, oke Kewu and oke Ikia.
13. The Yoruba believed that women who repeatedly gave birth to children who did not live long were being victimised by abiku sprites. In order to keep such children alive special precautions had to be taken, taboos had to be observed and rituals performed. In Iganna, as elsewhere in the Oyo kingdom, abiku infants who displayed the habit of sucking their toes were singled out for special initiation through the orisa Yemoja, and named Agbonyin.
14. Their idile, known as oluwo araba, together with four other idile, has since held the oluwo office in rotation.
15. The Sabiganna refer to Isokun's lineage in Oyo as their idile iya, the patrilineage of their mother. Whenever he visits Oyo the Sabiganna first calls in at Isokun's in order to pay homage to his "mother". Also, before entering the palace the new Alaafin must go to Isokun's to be initiated into his new role by those who act as his "fathers" (Johnson 1921:42).
16. The impact of the nineteenth century wars on the development of domestic slavery was considerable in many parts of Yorubaland. Hopkins (1973:140) estimates that by the end of the last century the 104 large houses in Ibadan had on average 500 slaves each. In Abeokuta during the 1880s there were many men possessing 100 to 500 slaves (Oroge 1971:167) As one Anglican missionary wrote in 1880, "The ambition of the well-to-do is to continue to increase his stock of slaves whilst the poor man looks most anxiously and eagerly forward to the purchase of one or two just as a poor cultivator in England looks forward to the purchase of a plough and an ox" (quoted in Oroge 1971:180).
17. Similarly, the great Yoruba war chiefs of the nineteenth century were reputed for their generosity to their loyal soldiers, to whom they gave a fair share in the spoils of war, including slaves to work their farms (Ojo 1966:59).
18. It should be added, however, that this does not imply that timing is not important. Quite the contrary; controlling the timing, or setting the time for important events, is always the prerogative of those in authority. The wealthy-powerful Yoruba chief could, for example, set the time for



organising an owe working party, which called on the additional labour of his followers. Important rituals are always preceded by a divination ceremony to have the timing of the festival ratified by the orisa Ifa.

19. The relative underproductivity of Yoruba agriculture as a result of socio-cultural constraints illustrates Sahlins' (1974:98) argument about the discontinuity of what he has called the "domestic mode of production" which underuses labour and by implication resources. With present-day commercialisation of food crop production in Iganna both labour and resources are more intensively used: wage labour is hired, fallowing periods are shorter, more land has come under cultivation and mixed cropping is practised.
20. A very famous example of men who used their matrilineal ties to gain access to chiefly office was in Iseyin in the early nineteenth century, when Ajisibi, the son of a royal daughter, succeeded in becoming Aseyin (king of Iseyin), ousting the original dynasty of the town's founder. His royal descendants are still referred to as idile obinrin ("lineage of woman") in contrast to the original idile okunrin ("lineage of man").
21. The affinal relationship between descendants of a daughter of the idile and those who claim "true" agnatic descent from its founder is fraught with ambiguities which may come to the fore when the daughter's son succeeds to a chiefly office vested in her father's idile. His descendants will later be entitled to put claims to the title on equal footing with the descendants of the agnatic line. By then the affinal status of the daughter's descendants may have become so blurred that they too will presume agnatic status in the idile. Such instances are so pervasive in Yorubaland that the "true" agnatic descent claims of many well-established royal and chiefly houses are based more on fiction than fact. At the same time the fierce conflict which may develop when "sons of daughters" compete for royal or chiefly succession is not just a fight to block usurpers; it is also the struggle of a whole affinal line to become "agnates".
22. Schwab's analysis of the social organisation of kin-based groups in Oshogbo is couched in the terms of the segmentary lineage theory as formulated by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940) and Fortes (1953). Yet in 1956 M.G. Smith had already indicated that "the weakness of lineage theory hitherto has been to mistake the ideology for actuality" (1956:65). For the analysis of the process of group formation and government in such societies, Smith argued that recourse must be had "to an abstract theoretical frame of government" (ibid.:70). For the purpose of this thesis I wish to argue, however, that even this theoretical frame is inadequate if it does not incorporate the analysis of the system of production in relation to the historical changes that took place in the society under study.
23. Oroge (1971:151) also mentions instances of big patrons who would send groups of their household slaves and other dependants to give assistance to their loyal followers.
24. The fact that none of the descendants of this royal house



has ever been chosen as Šabiganna by the kingmakers is said to be due to this ancestor's cruelty. This story illustrates the great importance the Yoruba attach to hereditary traits such as health and character, both of which affect the symbolic capital of the idile.

25. Information obtained from chief Ojedokun, the Bale-Ikia.
26. Unlike the slave owner who could take his female slaves as wives, and own their children, the moneylender could not tamper with his female iwofa. To do so would have meant forfeiting his claim for repayment of the loan, as well as incurring heavy fines (Johnson 1921:128; Fadipe 1970:192).
27. The praise-greetings (oriki) to important ancestors often made reference to the fact that they had had many slaves and iwofa.
28. People who had received help from a patron were usually anxious to acclaim this publicly. Patrons were desirous of public recognition of their "altruism" and power to help others, as Lloyd (1974:166) notes, so the client's acclaim made it easier for him to call on the patron's help a second time. The client in his own interest would want to advertise the fact that a powerful benefactor stood behind him: to discourage possible victimisation by enemies, and to avert accusations of witchcraft which may follow on his prosperity.
29. Apart from farm produce, and the smoked meat contributed by the hunters, each town had to present to the Alaafin bundles of beere grass which was used for thatching. This was kept for repairs to the roof of the royal palace. Hence the name of the festival, odun beere.
30. To this day, when festivities take place in Iganna drummers and bards (asun rara) never fail to liven up the occasion by showering oriki-orile praises on the participants. When animals are sacrificed in ritual contexts the women of the idile chant the oriki-orile while invoking the ancestors and their orisa. In a different context, when a child is sick the mother will often try to humour it by chanting its oriki-orile, in the belief that the strength of the idile forebears will make the child well again.
31. Apart from the actual incumbent of the royal or chiefly office, other members of the idile were not ranked differently from members of non-royal or chiefly idile. Only slaves as a class ranked below freeborn townspeople.
32. In his discussion of the political developments in nineteenth century Yorubaland, Peel (1976:24) also notes the extent to which the Ibadan war chiefs had by the end of the century consolidated their own houses and built up a town government very similar in structure to the Oyo government.



## CHAPTER VI      IGANNA 1900-1950s: STRETCHING THE PRODUCTIVE POTENTIALS OF THE HOUSEHOLD TO BREAKING POINT

In the present-day system of agricultural production in Iganna, as indeed in other Yoruba towns, the household has largely ceased to be effective as the cooperative unit of production. In this chapter I shall trace the genesis of the various factors of change which have affected the traditional social solidarity adversely and brought about the new order.

That the dislocation of the household as a productive unit should have taken place in this century is not surprising when we consider that with the advent of colonialism formerly discrete polities such as Iganna were suddenly thrown together in a new nation state. I shall analyse how and when these external factors presented themselves in Iganna, and how the people responded to them in the course of time.

No doubt the most important modern factor of change in agricultural production has been the increasing commercialisation of farming in response to the growing demand for foodcrops in the distant urban markets. Though the technology of foodcrop farming has hardly changed, cashcrop production in general has been greatly intensified, and the marketing of the crops has ceased to be restricted to the local town or area only.

Initially, during the first few decades of this century, it was mainly the big farmer-householders who could take advantage of these growing demands for farm produce in the distant urban markets. Since they had the necessary numbers of dependants to labour for them, they could accumulate wealth and maximise

their production while operating from within the traditional setting of the rural community. Eventually, however, the traditional system of production wore itself out when the new social order under the colonial regime started to bring too many townspeople out of their relative rural isolation, systematically eroding the traditional authority structures upon which household production depended.

In analysing how commercial farming for urban consumption developed in Iganna during the colonial era, I shall emphasise how the external demand for foodcrops first strengthened the position of the local big farmer-householders, but afterwards precipitated the collapse of the traditional system of household production. Before discussing these points, however, I shall first examine the social conditions in Iganna at the turn of the century, and then look at how the external trade in farm produce developed.

## 1. 1900-1930s: the era of the big farmer-entrepreneurs

### 1.1 Iganna at the turn of the century

1.11 Refuge at Okeho and resettlement      British rule became effectively established in northwestern Yorubaland after Alaafin Adeyemi I signed the treaty presented to him by Governor Carter in 1893. Similar treaties were signed by the Egba and Ibadan authorities in the same year, while the Ijebu and Ilorin people were conquered by military force in 1892 and 1897 respectively. By then the whole of Yorubaland was under British control, and attached as a Protectorate to the Colony of Lagos (Burns 1963: 211-3).

By 1893 Igannans had spent about ten years away from their homes, as refugees in the neighbouring town of Okeho. Okeho, located



on a high plateau and surrounded by steep rocks, glens and tracts of dense forest, offered ideal protection against the menace of the annual raids by the Dahomean armies. Large numbers of refugees from many other towns had resettled in the same neighbourhood in the course of the nineteenth century wars; some of them established permanent quarters in Okeho town, submitting to the authority of the Onjo (king of Okeho), while others living in adjoining settlements retained their autonomy as citizens of their town of origin (as for example natives of Iganna, Iwere, Aiyetoro and Ilaji<sup>1</sup>). The internal political situation within these uprooted towns was often anarchic and riddled with plots and intrigues (see Atanda 1973:56ff.). Among the Igannans, the powerful war chief Balogun Ogundeji masterminded a town riot in which Sabiganna Ojo was ousted from office and replaced by Oladokun. When in the mid-90s a murder case at Okeho was reported to Captain Bower, the first British Resident for the area, king Oladokun was among those indicted, and after being tried and found guilty he was publicly executed at Gbagi market in Ibadan.

It was incidents like this, and others like the "bombardment of Oyo" (ogun pepe) in 1895, following the Alaafin's alleged usurpation of his traditional rights in administering justice, which Captain Bower used in order to break the power and authority of the traditional rulers (see Burns 1963:212-3 and Atanda 1973:56ff). Moreover, with the cessation of warfare and slave-raiding, the kings and warriors were suddenly deprived of their main source of income. Among those whose power had thus been cut short was Balogun ("war chief") Ogundeji, who only a few years earlier had instigated the coup against Sabiganna Ojo in Okeho.

These were the circumstances under which peace was made between

the opposing Iganna factions, and the exiled king Ojo was recalled and reinstated at Okeho (or more precisely at Iganna-ita-Ara, the western fringe of Okeho where Igannan refugees were settled).

At the same time, many people were returning to their former sites in Iganna, where in the absence of the king a prince from the royal house of Polajo was appointed regent. Finally, in 1899, Sabiganna Ojo and the bulk of the exiled Igannans left Okeho for good and started rebuilding the old town.

1.12 Early migrants and the abolition of slavery      The wars were not the only causes of social dislocation in Yorubaland in the nineteenth century; slave-raiding was also instrumental in uprooting thousands of people from their ancestral homes. While many people displaced in one of these ways chose to settle permanently in their new homes, others preferred to return to their towns of origin. The position of slaves, however, was very different from that of ordinary refugees. Governor Carter's initial intention was to eradicate the whole institution of slavery in the country immediately after the signing of the treaties with the various Yoruba factions; by 1896, however, his attitude towards this thorny issue was considerably altered by the pragmatic consideration that "...the main industries of the country would be disorganised if not extinguished.....regard must be paid also to the rights of property, even in West Africa" (Oroge 1971:379). This policy of "gradualism" with regard to the emancipation of domestic slaves was to continue for at least another two decades. The redemption fee which slaves had to pay for their freedom was fixed at £3.15s., which was the current market price for slaves immediately before British penetration of the interior in 1892 (Oroge 1971:383).



Differences in legal status between the capital and the interior made Lagos into a veritable haven for runaway slaves in the 1890s (Oroge 1971:393); as Lagos was a British colony, slaves from the interior of the Protectorate taking up residence there were no longer considered slaves, neither could they be returned to their owners. Thus the establishment of the Protectorate marked the first wave of emigration from Iganna, and rural-urban migration in general. Among the early migrants, some went to Ibadan, others to Abeokuta, many others scattered to various places, but the largest number settled in Lagos. Unlike present-day Iganna migrants who tend to uphold their hometown identity in the cities through the associations they form, by marrying partners from Iganna and by maintaining contacts with the people living there, the early migrants did not so strongly adhere to their Iganna identity. This is partly explicable in traditional terms, since migration in the old days usually implied a more radical severing of the former town and kinship links, as well as the adoption of citizenship of the new town of residence. It is also partly explicable by the fact that many of the early migrants to the cities were of slave origin. Finally, another partial explanation concerns the tendency of these migrants to marry non-Igannans. Yet, notwithstanding this estrangement, the early migrants have retained some links with Igannans, fulfilling especially valuable functions as trade contacts or as hosts or patrons for the more recent Iganna migrants.

It is now no longer possible to estimate exactly the extent of the first wave of emigration from Iganna to the urban centres, but information obtained from many elderly people interviewed on this topic points to a real exodus at the turn of the century which depleted the town of at least a few hundred people<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, at the close of this period, domestic slaves who had

remained in Iganna gradually regained their freedom as slavery was being phased out by drifting into to category of iwofa debt-labourers. After paying back the sum for which they had been purchased most of them became adopted members of their masters' households, so that it is now virtually impossible to ascertain who is of slave origin and who is not.

## 1.2 The development of cashcropping for the urban markets

It was pointed out earlier that most of the cashcrops grown by Iganna farmers did not circulate outside the limited sphere of the local town markets and those of the adjoining towns. After the cessation of the wars and the imposition of British rule, however, the inclusion of farm produce in the external trade began to develop, precipitating the radical changes in the relations of production which underlie the present-day migration phenomenon.

The most obvious explanation for this development of commercial farming can be found, first, in the general expansion of trade throughout Nigeria since the beginning of the colonial era, and secondly in the concomitant growth of the urban centres. Unlike the traditional towns, where the majority of the population was engaged in agricultural production, the occupations of urban dwellers were becoming more diversified. In cities like Ibadan and Lagos increasing numbers of people were no longer farming, making a living instead as wage labourers, white collar workers, traders or artisans; hence their dependence on farm produce from the hinterland.

The development of the farm produce trade between Iganna and the urban centres took place alongside and independently of British commercial interests in Nigeria, since it consisted



(until recently) almost exclusively of food crops which are not exported overseas. Thus the various crops which the colonial Administration encouraged farmers to grow never prospered or developed to any meaningful extent in the Iganna area,<sup>3</sup> while on the other hand the stepping-up of foodcrop production for commercial purposes, in response to growing demand, was entirely the work of local entrepreneurs.

The first distant marketing area where agricultural products from Iganna were sold was Abeokuta, some sixty miles to the south. The crops marketed there included palm kernels, melon seeds and peppers, though later other bulky goods, such as maize, yams, beans and cassava were traded also, as well as products like shea butter, indigo dye and locust beans, which were gathered and processed by Iganna women. The trade in farm produce from Iganna to Ibadan (a distance of eighty miles) developed only in the twenties, after the first World War. By then local motor transport services were operating more regularly, so that farm produce, after being carried by headportage to Okeho or Iseyin, could be taken further to Ibadan by lorry. During the same period trade with Abeokuta also improved when the motor road to Lanlate and Ado-Awaiye was constructed, reducing the mileage of headportage.

Between the 20s and the 30s the first three intermediary farm markets in the Iganna area were established, bringing about a considerable expansion in the trade in farm produce. The markets were held every four days, and functioned mainly as bulking places for farm produce destined for the urban centres. Joloko, about ten miles south of Iganna, was the first to be established in 1925. By 1930 two more markets had sprung up: Adeoye's market on the Igangan road, and Apata-Ibadan market on the Iwere-ile road. Whereas the latter

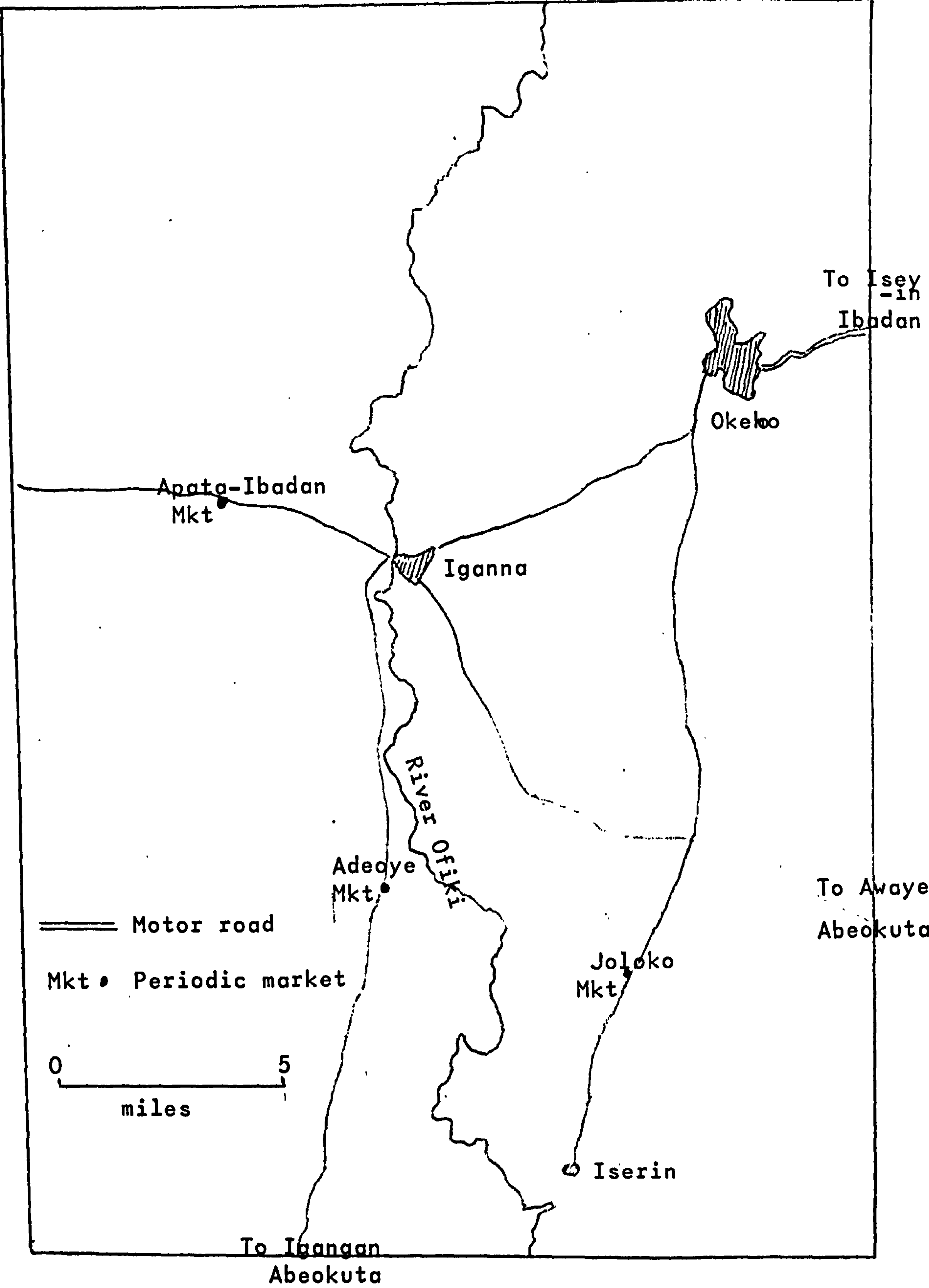
bulked farm produce mainly for Ibadan, the other two were geared to Abeokuta in the south. Although the Adeoye and Apata-Ibadan markets no longer exist, the trade in farm produce has continued to grow in the post-World War II period, as can be gathered from the nine periodic markets now scattered in the farm areas around Iganna (see Maps 4 and 7).

### 1.3 The big agricultural producer-creditors (olowo) and debt-labour (iwofa)

In the absence of trading firms or government agencies to act as brokers in allocating farm produce to the consumer sector (as existed in the case of export crops such as cocoa, rubber and groundnuts), the production of and external trade in foodcrops was initially dominated by the producers themselves. As the supply of food crops for the urban areas required both the production of large surpluses in the rural towns, and the means of transporting these crops over long distances, it was the big farmers who could most effectively engage in the expanding trade. While the technology of farming remained unchanged and no independent middle trade or motor transport developed, small farmers had neither the capital nor the personnel to engage in the long distance farm produce trade.

Many chiefs who had made their fortunes by slave-raiding and trading turned to this farm produce market at the imposition of peace. Elderly informants named a number of such chiefs-turned-farmer-entrepreneurs, including the Sabiganna and chiefs Bada, bale-Aiyede, bale-Ikia, Balogun, Jagun, Basipa, Agbakin and Akiniku. A number of wealthy commoners, however, were also mentioned in this context, especially those who were the most outstanding men in the community during the 20s. Moreover, as time went on and some of the old chiefs died,





Map 7

Iganna 1920s - 1930s

their heirs did not automatically become wealthy and powerful; chiefly status and wealth and power no longer necessarily went hand in hand. Two reasons can be given for this. First,

during the colonial era the king and the chiefs could no longer benefit from many of the traditional sources of income such as tolls and tribute; hence chiefs were often just as hard up as any commoner in the community. Secondly, the new source of wealth which depended on cashcropping was, in principle, as much within the reach of commoners as of chiefs. In fact, as time went on, chiefs tended to be less entrepreneurial than commoner farmers in Iganna. This, informants commented, was due mainly to the chiefs' obligations to attend so many time-consuming official functions.

As the institution of slavery had thrived under the nineteenth century era of the war chiefs, so the iwofa institution of debt labour flourished as never before in Iganna during the first decades of this century. In order to maximise their crop production the big farmers were most of all in need of extra hands on their farms. The practice of pawning children was very widespread, and it was by no means only the wealthy who could obtain iwofa; many an average farmer would at times have one or two iwofa. The big farmers remembered and often cited, however (such as Oje Sango, Orukotan, Efunmi, Latulo, and at least twenty more) are those who had ten or twenty male iwofa working in their farms (female iwofa were more commonly used for headportering of farm produce along the caravan routes to the distant markets).

Sales of farm produce in the cities were usually supervised by the (male) agents of the big farmers, while the actual marketing-retailing was carried out by the farmers' womenfolk. On their return home these women would take along various



imported commodities for retail in Iganna. Throughout the development of this external trade the big farmers stayed at home; thus they still operated in the traditional way (although on a much larger scale), retaining control over both their dependants and the allocation of their produce.

With the expansion of the external trade, a common currency began to circulate in the late 1890s. Though shell money continued to be used in local market transactions in Iganna until the 1930s, the new currency (popularly referred to as sile funfun, "white shillings") came increasingly into demand, especially after 1916 when direct taxation was introduced (see Coleman 1958:57-8). The result of this inflow of a common currency and consumer commodities was that the cost of living began to rise, even in rural towns like Iganna. As long as the majority of the people in Iganna remained tied to the town and the land, the big farmer-entrepreneurs exercised almost exclusive control over the inflow, accumulation and redistribution of wealth in the community. As more and more debts were incurred as a result of the rising cost of living, the big farmers who were acting as moneylenders (olowo) continued to benefit by the iwofa services of the small farmers (or those of their sons and daughters, whom the small farmers often pawned instead of themselves).

Finally, it should be mentioned that during this period of long distance trade expansion (up to about 1930), a number of Iganna women also became affluent creditors in the community, mostly as producers of shea butter, palm oil, small livestock and indigo, which circulated both in the local and the external trade. None of them, however, was at that time trading in farm produce in the way that merchant-traders do nowadays. As producers in their own right who were usually established in

their natal compounds, most of these women (among others, Iya Olori-oso, Asambi omo-Jagun, Iya Alagutan omo-Iyake, Bojuro omo-Polajo) had iwofa girls working for them.

#### 1.4 Conditions favouring the power-wealth position of the big farmer-entrepreneurs

It is important to stress that at the beginning of this century the big farmer-entrepreneurs were still running their household production on traditional lines, as explained in the previous chapter. Although they took their produce to the distant urban markets, they were still using the labour of individuals who stood in a relationship of personal dependence to them (wives, children and iwofa). Thus the big farmer's dependants, just like those of the small farmer, were both his co-producers and his agents (salespeople) in marketing his produce. For some time indeed this new pattern of agricultural activity continued to rely on the traditional system of household production. Eventually, however, the potentialities of the old pattern having been exhausted, the continued incentive to increased production precipitated qualitative changes in the relations of production, which will be the subject of later analysis. Here I shall examine the major reasons why household production in general, and the big farmer system in particular, has persisted until relatively late in the Iganna area. The two major conditions which seem to have favoured this slow evolution were the reactionary system of local government up to the 1950s on the one hand, and the lack of credit facilities (apart from the traditional ones as enshrined in the iwofa institution) on the other.

#### 1.41 The reactionary regimes of Ross-Ladugbolu and Adeyemi II

However prominent Iganna may have been in the 19th century as a strategic outpost warding off the military threat from Dahomey for the crumbling Oyo empire, in the subsequent colonial



era, with the focus of progress shifting further south and east, it became a real backwater. Indeed British commercial interests in southwestern Nigeria developed mainly in the Lagos area along the coast, and up-country in and near the forest belt where the main exports to be tapped were rubber, timber, palm products and cocoa. The most profitable of these was undoubtedly cocoa, not only for the exporters but also for the thousands of Yoruba farmers who over the years moved into the unoccupied forest lands (especially of Ife, Ondo and Ilesa) from as far afield as Osun division and Kwara State (see Galletti et al., 1956; Berry, 1975).

Closely related to the tapping of local resources for export was the development of communications. Although in 1907 Oyo and Iseyin were already linked by a motorable road to Ibadan and Lagos, motor transport itself was developed only later by local entrepreneurs. In contrast to this, the construction in 1896 of a railway from the coast northwards was an enterprise of the Central Government. When in 1916 Lagos was linked by rail to Jebba on the river Niger (Burns 1963:214), Oyo had been completely bypassed. Instead, "Ibadan and Osogbo became the most important railway stations in (Oyo) Province. And largely because of this, both towns.....became the most important commercial centres in the Province" (Atanda 1973:219). These were also the areas where other prominent features of "modernisation", such as wage labour and school education, progressed most speedily.

That northwestern Yorubaland suffered a stunted economic growth as a result of its failure to attract British commercial interests is not, however, the whole story; the specific political form of colonial administration which prevailed in the area during the first half of this century must also be taken into consideration. As it happened, an extremely

reactionary regime of Native Administration developed in Oyo under Alaafin Siyambola Ladugbolu between 1906 and 1944. In his remarkable study of this unique phase in Yoruba history appropriately referred to as "the new Oyo empire" (in a book of the same name), Atanda has pointed out that the person most responsible for this regime was Captain Ross, the then District Commissioner for Oyo (1973:107, *passim*). Although part of Governor MacGregor's plan after inaugurating the Native Council Ordinance of 1901 was to revive the ancient power and glory of the Alaafin of Oyo as Head of Yorubaland, it was in fact Ross who devoted the best part of his twenty-five years in office as Resident in Oyo (1906-31) to putting this ideal into practice (*ibid*:100,106). Ross's zeal in championing the cause of Oyo during this unusually long period of office seems to have been motivated by a mixture of a faith in MacGregor's early (i.e. pre-Lugardian) approach to Indirect Rule, a close friendship with the Alaafin and a personal ambition for power (*ibid*:107ff., 170ff.). After Lugard's amalgamation of the northern and southern Protectorates of Nigeria in 1914, Ross strived very hard to extend the Alaafin's paramountcy over the Ife and Ibadan Divisions in what was then carved out as Oyo Province. Unlike Ibadan and Ife Divisions in which several Native Authorities were included, in Oyo Division the Alaafin was the sole Native Authority. With Ross as a personal friend and Resident for the whole Province living in Oyo, Alaafin Ladugbolu succeeded in wielding almost absolute power throughout Oyo Division from the time of his accession to the throne in 1912 until 1931, when Ross left Oyo for good. This power the Alaafin exerted mainly through the Native courts which had been established in each of the seven Districts within the Division (Iganna being one of the Districts under the headship of the Sabiganna, who was also president of the court) (Atanda 1973:193ff.). Subordinate kings



in the various districts who prior to the new regime established under Ross had entertained relatively loose links with the Alaafin, some even going counter to his interests or wishes at times, were given no choice but to tow the line dictated by Oyo. This attitude of total submission became even more pronounced after the Okeho-Iseyin riots of 1916, as a result of which a number of prominent chiefs were publicly executed (ibid:146-8, 194-6).

Whereas in pre-colonial times the Alaafin's power was kept in check by the powerful Council of State (the Oyomesi) and the Ogboni cult society (see Morton-Williams 1971:53ff.), in the "new Oyo empire" only the colonial administration could check the Alaafin's power; this, however, through its representative Ross, gave the Alaafin a free hand to use and abuse his powers. Thus under Ladugbolu's regime both the Oyomesi and the District kings, the chiefs and all other pressure groups within and outside Oyo town were silenced, reduced to figureheads concerned only with kowtowing to the Alaafin and his friend Ross in order to hold on to their positions.

The Alaafin exerted his power most effectively through his messengers and palace retainers (ilari), who soon became notorious throughout Oyo Division for their high-handedness and extortionist practices towards the ordinary people (Atanda 1973:204, passim). Though Ross was aware of the excesses indulged in by the Alaafin's messengers, he probably considered them the unavoidable accompaniments of his power policies. In a memorandum dated 24 April 1929 he bemoans the fact that "the Alaafin's messengers are becoming a perfect nuisance.....The more power the Alaafin is given the more his relations and slaves and hangers on spread themselves" (ibid:213).

Not only did Ross condone the excesses of the Alaafin's henchmen, but on the whole he positively connived with and supported Ladugbolu's reactionary regime, steering a policy of divide and rule in the areas where the Alaafin's influence was weak, and systematically insulating traditionally loyal areas such as Iganna (which also happened to be the areas where British commercial interests were minimal) from the forces of change at work in the rest of the country. Most of all Ross revealed his autocratic and reactionary inclinations in his dealings with his subordinate colonial officers, Christian missionaries and educated Nigerians. He would instruct his subordinates not to interfere with the Alaafin's authority in the Native Courts, and discourage District Officers from carrying out inspection tours as in the rest of the country. When, moreover, abuses of power by the Alaafin's messengers were reported by these Officers, the cases were not usually followed up at Oyo (Atanda 1973:194, 211-3, *passim*).

By turning away from the cult of the ancestors and the orisa, Christians posed a challenge to the ideological basis on which traditional power and authority rested. Though Baptist, Anglican and Catholic Missions had been opened in Oyo Division in the second half of the nineteenth century, their proselytising activities were strongly hampered throughout Ross's tenure of office. When in 1908 the American Baptist missionary Pinnock openly criticised the Alaafin's "oppression of the poor", he became persona non grata with Ross and was forced to leave Oyo the following year (Pinnock 1917:82ff.).

Though Catholic missionaries arrived in Oyo in 1884 on personal invitation from Alaafin Adeyemi I, their activities were later totally stultified by Ross and Ladugbolu. It was only by outwitting the powers that were that new Catholic churches were



founded at Iseyin and Akinmorin. In a report in 1932 Father Coquard commented that, apart from the Catholic mission, the town of Oyo itself "is retarded as a result of Captain Ross's policy" (Hales 1968).

School education, which in Yorubaland was almost exclusively pioneered by the Christian missions, also failed to develop in the Oyo area. Ross's dislike for educated Nigerians was well known, and the few literate members who took part in the deliberations of the Ibadan Native Administration at its inception were excluded after 1914 (Atanda 1973:191). When Lagos-based lawyer Folarin attempted to conduct an enquiry into the 1916 Okeho-Iseyin riots that went deeper than the official reports which merely explained the disturbances in terms of the people's opposition to the new system of Indirect Rule (introduced by Lugard's Ordinance of 1914-16 - see Burns 1963:234), he was ordered to leave. By disguising himself as a travelling Muslim Malam Folarin nevertheless succeeded in outwitting Ross and Ladugbolu and conducting his enquiries. His findings<sup>4</sup> that the riots were directed more against the oppressive regime of the Alaafin and his retainers than the system of Indirect Rule as such have more recently been substantiated by Atanda (1969:498-514).

Although Alaafin Adeyemi had initially been a patron of the Catholic missionaries, supporting them in their opening of a school in the centre of town, by 1905 he had grown suspicious of educated people, complaining to Father Hauger in these words:

Father, you are my friend, but I will never give you any of my children to train. You send them to school, and as soon as they know how to read and write, they all leave Oyo; and I do not want my people to go away. They think they are highly educated and no longer agree to cultivate the land (Hales 1968).

Adeyemi's successors, and especially Ladugbolu, were even more

opposed to school education and the spirit of "progress" (which to them was a euphemism for insubordination and disrespect for authority) that it instilled in the younger generations. Though Ross did not openly oppose the development of education (which on the whole was encouraged by the colonial administration), by obstructing the work of the missionaries in whose hands the founding and running of the schools was left he also retarded education throughout the Oyo Division (see Atanda 1973:235-7, 243-4). Not a single school was established in the Okeho-Iganna district throughout the Ross era, in spite of the fact that Baptists in the area were organising themselves as early as the 1920s.

According to Atanda (1973:249, ff.), the "New Oyo Empire" which Ross had engineered during his twenty-five years in office was dismantled in barely three years under his successor, Ward-Price. Ross's departure in 1931 coincided with the appointment as Governor of Sir Donald Cameron, who initiated a more progressive policy of decentralisation within the various Native Authorities. But whereas the colonial administration proposed that the changes be made gradually, Ward-Price brought about rapid radical changes in the administrative structure of Oyo Province; by April 1934 the Ibadan Native Authority had been made independent of Oyo, and the Resident himself moved his seat from Oyo town to Ibadan.

However radical and far-reaching these changes may have been in Oyo Province as a whole, in the Iganna area they had little effect before the death of Alaafin Ladugbolu in 1944. The fact that even within the geographically and commercially isolated Oyo Province Iganna was more conservative than a number of other towns (such as Ilero, Ijio and Itasa) can be partly ascribed to the traditionally strong bonds of personal



loyalty between the Sabiganna and the Alaafin.

Shortly after Ladugbolu's death, in the post-World War II period, the political structure of Nigeria was reshaped; the southern provinces were grouped into two Regions, the Eastern and the Western, and a Civil Service was set up which took over many of the important functions of local government previously under the competence of the Native Authorities. As Oyo had produced a smaller number of educated people than the more progressive southern Yoruba towns, only a few were recruited into the Civil Service. The result was that Oyo Division was not so well represented in the new administration, which inevitably retarded the development of the area. The situation was further aggravated when Alaafin Adeyemi II, who succeeded Ladugbolu in 1945, pledged his support for the N.C. N.C. (National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons), which was the Opposition party in the Western Region.

When national political parties were formed and started to campaign for electorate support, the Action Group under the leadership of Chief Awolowo emerged as the strongest party in the Western Region, winning control of the Western House of Assembly in the first elections of 1951. By that time the Native Authority system of local government had been replaced by a system of more democratically constituted District Councils served by selected chiefs as well as elected councillors (Coleman 1958:314). In this reorganisation Iganna and another fifteen towns and villages were lumped together to form the Okeho-Iganna District Council, with headquarters at Okeho. Yet, inspite of these efforts to democratise local government, the influence of the Alaafin still loomed large in the Okeho-Iganna council. As council members were usually selected and appointed on the basis of party affiliation, the council was

from its inception N.C.N.C. dominated.<sup>5</sup> Thus Adeyemi II was still able to exert considerable control in the area, if not directly in the way his predecessor Ladugbalu had done through his dreaded messengers, at least indirectly through the local N.C.N.C. party stalwarts. As a result of the N.C.N.C. affiliation, however, the whole area was once more relegated to a backwater in the 1950s, when the Action Group controlled the government in the Western Region.<sup>6</sup>

In the previous chapter I concluded the analysis of the traditional system of agricultural production by pointing out that the functioning of the system depended both on the relative isolation of the local community and on the control farmers could exert over their household dependants. Such control, however, is itself dependent on the traditional authority structures which devolve from the king, through the chiefs and the elders down to the household heads. Thus the tightening of these structures under the Ross-Ladugbolu regime, especially in traditionally loyal areas like Iganna, had the effect of reinforcing social solidarity in the households and in the community at large. By keeping the people tied to the land and the local polities relatively isolated from the outside world, this reactionary, authoritarian system of local government also fostered the power-wealth position of the big farmer-entrepreneurs who could continue to sell their crops in the distant markets and thus maintain their positions as creditors in the rural community. After Ross's departure from Oyo in 1931 the Alaafin's absolute power began to crumble, but in the Iganna area it was a long time before the authority pyramid was finally eroded.

1.42 The need for creditors      Earlier I mentioned how the system of borrowing money sanctioned by the iwofa institution



thrived in Iganna in the first decades of this century. As a source of labour recruitment, this institution formed the basis for the power-wealth position of the big farmers. The colonial administration, though opposed to the iwofa practice, never succeeded in eradicating it, inspite of a public notice in 1927 which declared unlawful the use of children under the age of sixteen as iwofa. The same notice stated further that from that date on the value of all debt-labour should count towards the extinction of both the debt and the interest thereon (N.A.I.Oyo Prof.1028/989).

In Iganna, however, children were still being pawned in the 1940s, while today adults occasionally perform debt-labour in the form of a-lo-oko-bo ("we go to the farm and return"), which is really a euphemism for the illegal practice of iwofa. The main reason why this institution persisted for so long in Iganna cannot be found in the adage that "old customs die hard"; what was lacking, above all, was alternative access to the credit that people seemed to need so badly. Moneylenders' interest rates were prohibitive, usually five or ten percent monthly<sup>7</sup>.

An alternative, however, began to develop in the 1940s, when the middle trade in farm produce had expanded sufficiently to enable traders to supply farmers with credit in the form of advance payment on crops still to be harvested. This was an important development, the implications of which will be discussed in the following chapter.

## 2. The decline of the big farmer-entrepreneur in Iganna, or the big scramble for access to external resources

The information collected places the heyday of the big farmer-

entrepreneurs in Iganna in the 1920s; from that time their power began to wane and their wealth diminish as they gradually lost control over both the external trading of their farm produce and their dependent co-producers. With the expansion of trade a whole new category of independent traders in farm produce emerged, especially in the period between the two world wars. In Iganna many women specialised in this middle trade, with the result that the small farmers could now channel their farm produce into the external trade as well as the big farmers. In their capacity as traders these women were no longer restricted to marketing their husbands' produce, but were able to build up larger clienteles of farmers.

As far as production itself was concerned, farmers continued to draw mainly on the labour power of their sons and dependants, including iwofa, until the 1940s when non-native farmers and hired labourers began to make their appearance in Iganna. This was also the time when the young men began to leave Iganna in ever-increasing numbers in the hope of finding employment in the cities. The girls soon followed the men, so that it was not only the big farmer-entrepreneur system which collapsed, but more generally the system of household production dependent on the cooperation of wives and children.

As both the emergence of the women traders in farm produce and the emigration of the young people constitute radical changes in the traditional system of agricultural production, I shall now discuss how each of these two social categories gained increasing independence over the years to the extent of making the break referred to.

## 2.1 The growing independence of women and the development of the middle trade in farm produce

According to information from elderly informants, the first



middle traders in farm produce between Iganna and the cities were the men who originally acted as sales agents for the big farmer-entrepreneurs. As their activities took them away from home for days on end, during which time they transacted business with other traders in the cities, these men often succeeded in building up trading capital for themselves, so that eventually, with the experience they had accumulated, they became traders in their own right. Apart from these men, informants stated that from the beginning many more women took part in the long distance trade than men, especially in headportering on the caravan routes. These women also began to take advantage of the expertise they gained in the course of their travels, and often started trading independently of their menfolk.

The reason why the men have in more recent years been phased out of the middle trade seems to lie mainly in the nature of trading itself and the traditional sexual division of labour. Traders from the rural areas who take farm produce to the cities usually work in conjunction with city-based traders who provide them with accommodation and storage. Some of these traders based in Ibadan and Mushin (Lagos) are Iganna men<sup>8</sup>. The women traders, however, are based in Iganna. When they take the farm produce to the cities they usually stay on for some days with the city based traders while they retail their goods. Since the actual selling of goods (including farm produce) in the markets is a female occupation, when Iganna women started trading for themselves it was not only the big farmers that lost control over the transporting and retailing of farm produce, but their agents as well.

The independence which women have achieved by including in their trading activities the marketing of farm produce (which was traditionally in the hands of their husbands and producers) is part of a more general process of female emancipation in

modern times. Two historical factors of change have contributed most directly to the women's growing ability to act independently of their men: the greater facility with which divorce may be obtained, and the development of motor transport.

**2.11 Divorce** Probably the most fundamental factor of change which hit the household as a productive unit was the Native Ordinance of 1914 which enabled the women to sue their husbands for divorce. The customary court in Iganna has been dealing with divorce cases since that time. Although it was not possible to establish divorce rates for the earlier years, according to informants, which included one court messenger (akoda), divorce was less common in Iganna before 1950. "Formerly our men refrained more from seducing other men's wives for fear of medicine men" (onisegun). Nowadays, however, court registers show that from 1971 to 1974 twenty-five divorce cases a month are heard on average. A last ditch stand to check these increasing rates was made by the conservative N. C.N.C. party members in the form of a petition at the Okeho-Iganna District Council meeting (27 June 1955) demanding that "thorough investigations be made from the complainants before summons of divorce could be granted, and such women should be retained with their parents for judgement" (N.A.I., Oyo Pro.I, 4827/1). Divorce rates, however, were not affected, and the petition was not mentioned again.

The most common grounds appearing in court registers for "rejecting" a husband (ko'ko sile) are neglect and ill treatment. Almost invariably women who sue for divorce have a relationship started with another man whom they want to marry. Although I did not in any systematic way probe into women's motivations for divorce, women have said to me that in choosing a new husband they take into consideration financial security, and prefer a man who can help them in their trading



activities.

2.12 Motor transport As traditionally the transportation of farm produce from the farms to the towns is predominantly a female task, when the big farmer-entrepreneurs in Iganna began to sell their crops in the distant markets they recruited large numbers of women as headporters. Slaves were also frequently used at first, but with the phasing out of slavery headportage became almost exclusively women's work.

With the development of motor roads, however, the need for portage was considerably reduced. In 1931 Iganna was linked by road to Okeho, so that lorries could go directly to Ibadan via Oyo. Later, in the 40s and 50s, lorry tracks were made by the local community, spreading out into the farming districts and linking periodic markets with the nearby towns.

Though headportage is still used over short distances between the farms and the local markets, the use of lorry transport has literally unburdened the vast numbers of women who, either as farmers' dependants or as hirelings, have for years trudged the long caravan routes with their heavy loads. Moreover, with the introduction in the 50s of engine driven mills for grinding corn and other staple crops, women have been further relieved from the many daily routines and drudgery of processing farm produce. Thus, by taking advantage of modern technology many women have been able to devote much more of their time to their own trade and crafts than before, thereby asserting their independence of their menfolk.

## 2.2 The growing independence of young people and the decline of the iwofa institution

The young unmarried people who made up the bulk of the

agricultural labour pool, especially in the form of the iwofa institution on which the big farmer-entrepreneur system thrived, took a longer time to break off the constraints of the traditional social order than the women traders. When the break came, however, it was more damaging to the traditional system of agricultural production than the actions of the women traders. Whereas these women have only appropriated an expanding sector in the production chain which was traditionally controlled by the farmer-producers themselves, the young people emigrating to the cities have actually swelled the ranks of the urban consumers of farm produce.

The historical processes of change precipitating this break, and the forces underlying them, are naturally more complex than this analysis could possibly hope to account for. Moreover, the various factors listed in this and the previous section, as well as being unavoidably selective, have for the purposes of this analysis been divided into those more directly relevant to the emancipation of women, and those more directly relevant to the emancipation of young people; they should, however, be seen as interacting on each other. With this caveat in mind, I shall proceed to look at school education, nationalism and paid farm labour from the standpoint of their liberating effects on young people.

**2.21 Schools** School education in Iganna started in 1938 with the opening of the Baptist mission school, followed ten years later by the Catholic mission school. Right down to 1955 attendance in these schools was low, totalling only about two hundred. When the Action Group government came to power in what was then the Western Region, it embarked on a programme of free primary education. The result of this was that in 1955 a Local Authority Council school and an Ansa-Ud-Deen Muslim school were opened in Iganna, and the total



number of pupils went up considerably.

These schools have undoubtedly played a decisive role in the emancipation of young people. Even before the expansion of education school pupils in Iganna formed a new category of young people who were not committed to the household and iwofa institutions on which the traditional system of agricultural production depended. Moreover, the European-type subjects taught in the schools diverted the pupils' interests away from their homes and towards non-agricultural occupations in which the urban environment offered most opportunities. From as early as the 1940s pupils leaving school began to drift to the cities in search of jobs. Although few to begin with, the impact they made on the masses of their age-mates not at school was considerable. Even today many Igannans recall the admiration and envy they felt for their friends who attended school, while they themselves had to work on the farm or serve their fathers' creditors as iwofa.

2.22 Rising nationalism While the new emerging elites gave strong support to the Action Group, in the Oyo Division the N.C.N.C. found its bastion in the traditional rulers, the big farmers and the farming population at large. These more conservative elements stood to lose most from the shift in power away from the traditional authority structures.

At the other end of the party political spectrum, the Action Group, by promoting school education and the new power positions of the educated and entrepreneurial elites in the Western Region, emerged (at least in the Iganna area) as the champion of the emancipation of the young people. Christians, the first pioneers of school education<sup>9</sup>, and modernists in general, were the strongest supporters of the minority Action

Group party in the N.C.N.C. dominated Okeho-Iganna District Council. Nigerian church ministers and teachers who by virtue of their professions exerted great influence in the rural communities often spoke out against the iwofa institution, and especially the practice of pawning children, calling such customs slavery. Painfully conscious of the fact that their home area was the least developed in the Western Region, young people saw no other way of catching up with the more progressive elements in Yorubaland than by getting out of the conservative environment of agricultural production and going to the cities.

2.23 Paid farm labour The custom of hiring farm labourers, developed in the Iganna area in the late 1940s, probably ran more counter to the traditional system of agriculture than any other single factor of change. Though the use of hired labour dates back to the early days of cocoa growing in Nigeria (Berry 1975:128), outside the cocoa belt hired labour developed much later. My own findings in Iganna indicated that farm labourers (agatu) first made their appearance in the area when Yoruba farmers from other towns began to settle in Iganna, and that on the whole these farmers call more often on the services of the agatu than do the Iganna farmers.

When the agatu first started to arrive in Iganna the youth exodus to the cities had not yet begun. Although cashcropping for the urban markets had already become widespread through the activities of the women traders, most Iganna farmers were still drawing on the labour of their sons, and many young people continued to be pawned as iwofa to their parents' creditors. What young Igannans found disconcerting about the use of hired labour was not only the fact that the agatu were paid wages, but also that most of them were in their age group.



They therefore seem to have had ambivalent feelings towards the agatu: on the one hand, as Yoruba, they tended to look down on these oloko nla ("person with large-bladed hoe"<sup>10</sup>), while on the other they felt envious and frustrated (especially those who did iwofa service) because they did the same work for nothing. But since farm labour among the Yoruba is not a market commodity, especially between people of the same town, the only alternative was to leave the rural home environment and go to the cities in the hope of finding salaried employment<sup>11</sup>.

### 3. Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to analyse how the changes from the traditional system of agricultural production to today's system of commercial farming came about in Iganna. If by commercial farming one understands a system of generalised production of cashcrops by local farmers for the urban markets, plus the activities of middle traders in farm produce and the use of hired labour provided by the agatu, this system was shown to develop only in the post-World War II period, expanding rapidly in the 1950s.

The reason why the Iganna area has developed at a slower pace than many other parts of Yorubaland was attributed mainly to the lack of British commercial interests in the area, to the absence of a numerically strong educated elite, and to the conservative policies of the local government.

Yet while the trade in farm produce expanded and the consumer sector in the urban centres continued to grow, a whole new category of big farmer-entrepreneurs rose to prominence in Iganna in the first decades of this century. These men

made use of the traditional institutions underpinning agricultural production, especially the provision of credit in the local community and the recruitment of iwofa debt-labourers, and were entrepreneurs in the sense that they began to maximise crop production for external trade with the distant markets, whereas traditionally farm produce used to circulate only in the local trade network.

The retention of the traditional authority structures which Captain Ross as British Resident in Oyo Province had championed for a quarter of a century, and upon which the power-wealth position of the big farmers depended, was in fact an administrative adventure which could not last indefinitely. Not only was a reactionary local regime in conflict with the nation-wide expansion which promoted the development of indigenous entrepreneurship, wage labour, literacy and many other modernising factors of change, all of which precipitated the rise in power of the new elites; but the Native Authority system itself was a totally artificial power construct from the traditional Yoruba point of view. Traditionally, the kings and chiefs derived their power and authority from the people, even though office had to be legitimised by descent and sanctioned by the ancestors and the orisa. With the introduction of Indirect Rule, however, the power of the kings and the chiefs no longer came from the people, but from the colonial administration. Instead of receiving tribute, tolls and other revenue such as ritual or judicial fines, the kings and major chiefs received salaries from the colonial government. Moreover, succession to chiefly office came to depend primarily on winning the favour of the administrative powers that were, rather than gaining the support of the townspeople as in the old days.

Consequently, once the system of Native administration



Authorities had outlived its usefulness for the colonial government and new elites and nationalist ideologies began to emerge, the power of the traditional rulers started to wane, and with it the traditional system of agricultural production which had already been undercut by the new category of women traders in farm produce.

In the following chapter I shall discuss the effects of the changes which took place in Iganna in the first half of this century on the relations of production as they are today. The aim of the analysis will be to gain a better insight into the dynamics of the migration phenomenon which, having been set in motion, continues to be reproduced under the conditions surrounding commercial farming.

## NOTES

1. Out of these, only Igannans settled on Okeho proper. Although the others settled on sites adjoining Okeho, the land actually belonged to Ilero.
2. Elderly informants in Lagos commented that those who had come with them from Iganna in the early days were "many" (a po). The women often sought work as laundresses, while the men made their living as weavers, drummers or labourers. Later, though, most of them and their children established themselves as trader-entrepreneurs, some even achieving considerable affluence, such as the big contractor from Ebute-Meta (Lagos), Alhaji Adeşina.
3. Cocoa, the major export crop in southwestern Nigeria, was introduced in the Iganna area only during the 1950s. Though farmers in the Oyo province were encouraged to grow corn and cotton for export as early as 1904, this project never involved Iganna farmers very much. Most of the cotton they grew circulated in the indigenous market system, and the cotton experiment, after an initial boom in certain areas (not including Iganna) proved to be a failure in the early 1920s (see Atanda 1973:223ff.). Government efforts to spread the production of palm kernels in Oyo Division in 1923 led to the establishment of palm oil plantations in a number of towns, including Iganna. These efforts, however, were not very rewarding (ibid:222). The only export crop of some significance in the Iganna area was shea nuts, which are collected from the shea butter trees that grow wild all over the savannah. But compared to other export crops such as cocoa and ground-nuts, international demand for shea nuts is very low.
4. Unpublished report c.1917 by Adebəsin Folarin, titled "The Okeho-Isehin Escapade". A copy of this text was shown to me by Chief A.P.B.Martins from Aranşę Cpd. during fieldwork conducted at Işeyin in 1972.
5. The fact that the N.C.N.C. received strong support from the more conservative elements in the Oyo area should not be interpreted as meaning that it was less progressive than other national parties. The stronghold of the N.C.N.C. was among the Ibo in the Eastern Region, and it was more political opportunism than party ideology that inspired its leaders to seek the support of the traditional rulers and largely illiterate peasantry among the Yoruba (see Coleman 1958, Sklar 1963, Dudley 1970, among others).
6. A number of development projects for which the Okeho-Iganna Council needed government approval and help (including the



construction of new roads, a transport service and a water supply scheme) were rejected or ignored by the Western Regional Government (N.A.I.Qyq Prof.4827/1,1955).

7. In the cocoa belt it was not uncommon for farmers to repay their creditors in export crops such as cocoa or palm oil, calculated at half the current market prices (Daramola and Jeje 1967:119-20). Such extortionist practices by means of which moneylenders obtained as much as fifty percent interest on loans did not seem to exist in the Iganna area.
8. Though the first distant markets for farm produce from Iganna were those of Abeokuta, in later years the Iganna middle traders have concentrated almost exclusively on the Ibadan and Lagos markets. The reason why the farm produce trade with Abeokuta is now conducted mainly by traders from that area rather than by Iganna traders is due to the fact the farmers from Abeokuta and from other towns south of Iganna who are farming in the Iganna area usually market their crops through their own women traders.
9. As a monotheistic religion which rejects the worship of lesser deities, Islam, like Christianity, constitutes a challenge to the ideological base of the authority structures in traditional Yoruba society which require that power and authority be legitimised by the ancestral orisa. In practice, however, Yoruba Muslims often show great flexibility in adjusting their faith to the cults of the lineage ancestors and the orisa. Islam came to Iganna long before the Dahomean wars of the last century, but Muslim lineage members, just like the Olorisa members, still repair to the ancestral graves to pray and make sacrifices when orisa festivals are held. When at these occasions a chicken is sacrificed, Muslims show a deviation from the traditional practice. Whereas traditionally the chicken has a foot placed on its head to keep it down while its body is pulled up, Muslims cut the chicken's head off with a knife. Apart from such refinements, Muslims on the whole adhered to the traditional cults by taking active parts in Egungun masquerades, Ifa initiations and the Oro festival.

Christians, on the other hand, have tended to dissociate themselves more radically from all forms of participation in orisa or ancestral rituals. Apart from theological objections to so-called "idol worship", Christians are often inclined to look down on the traditional cults, and to some extent even on Islam, as being backward religions associated with illiteracy. Because of its non-European roots, Islam is more likely to accommodate itself to traditional Yoruba values and beliefs than Christian ones. This would explain many Muslims' suspicion of school education, which

from the start was associated with Christianity in Yorubaland. As Sklar points out, "many Muslims appear to regard the Action Group as an agent of Christian domination" (1963:248). Reasons for this attitude lay in the neglect Muslim schools suffered in the Western Region when it came to allocation of funds, in the exclusion of Arabic language training from the school curriculum, and in the small numbers of government scholarships awarded to Muslim students (ibid:251).

10. This popular term of referring to migrant labourers has pejorative overtones. The fact that the agatu are non-Yoruba, and that they lower themselves by doing labourer work, are sufficient reasons for many Igannans to look down on them.
11. Yoruba tend to look down on any type of labourer work ("ise'lebira"). Yet while they would be ashamed of doing such work at home, they are often prepared to perform menial tasks in alien environments. Many migrants told me that in their first years of leaving Iganna they went to places where they were not known in order to find work as labourers. Similarly, many elderly informants from towns in Oṣun North Division told me that when they were young they went to Ghana (then known as the Gold Coast) to work as labourers on the railway, or at the ports of Tema and Takoradi. These were jobs that they would never have taken back home in Nigeria.



## CHAPTER VII      EFFECTS OF THE CHANGING RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION ON IGANNA FARMERS

The system of commercial farming in Iganna outlined in chapter IV is a far cry from the traditional system of agricultural production, a model of which was presented in chapter V. For the farmer-producers, now more than ever engaging in cashcrop production for the distant urban markets, three major displacements have taken place in the system of production. These displacements can be summarised as follows:

- i. A growing dependence by farmers on hired labour,
- ii. an increasingly dominant role played by the women in the middle trade in farm produce, and
- iii. the emergence of these women-traders as regular creditors to the farmers.

In this chapter I shall discuss the effects of these changes on the relations of production, arguing that the farmer's increasing dependence on and indebtedness to a category of co-producers which is no longer coterminous with the class of his household dependants, nor with the traditional class of credit and power controllers in the community (i.e. the king, the chiefs and the olowo), leads not only to the disintegration of the bonds of social solidarity but also to the farmer's financial loss qua cash crop producer: even when he makes profits he finds himself at the losing end of the modern system of production, and his large household, which in the past was an asset, now becomes a liability.

These radically changed relations of production, however, are obscured by the persistence of the effete traditional institutions. In what follows I shall try to clear away some of this

dead wood by investigating the methods of recruitment of farm labour, the processing and marketing of farm produce, and the provision of credit.

## 1. Farm labour

### 1.1 Young men's labour

Boys under ten can still be seen trotting behind their parents on the way to the farm, but the labour output of these children is naturally minimal. Boys who go to primary school may still be requested to work on the farm during the holidays, but the older they get the less ready they will be to help their fathers, especially nowadays when farm labour can fetch a wage; many adolescent schoolboys in Iganna prefer to do labourer work for farmers other than their fathers, for in this way they can earn some pocket money.

After leaving school, most young men stop farming altogether. Some go on to secondary modern schools in Okeho or Iseyin, a few even finding their way into grammar schools; but the majority of the school leavers emigrates to the cities in the way I described in chapter III. The few school leavers who stay on in Iganna usually become apprentice craftsmen.

The young men who have been staying on in Iganna as farmers over the last few decades have been those who did not go to school. Most of them started farming independently of their parents at around twenty, and like the migrants they often get married before the age of twenty-five; thus the days when farmers could draw on the labour of their adult sons for about ten years, or pawn them as iwofa to their creditors, definitely belong to the past. Most farmers that I observed worked alone



during the year, except occasionally when they hired the services of the agatu, or at harvest time when their wives would lend them a hand. Nor did I observe any working parties, such as aaro or owe, organised by the farmers. A fieldworker employed by the Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics who had spent more than two years among the Iganna farmers confirmed this impression, commenting that farmers were unwilling to help each other free of charge since, as he put it, "nowadays there is nothing done for nothing". It seems, then, that it is the fact that farm labour has become a commodity which can be bargained for which is most accountable for farmers' reluctance to provide aaro or owe labour on each other's farms.

Although the cultural value of having many children is still estimated very highly, practical disadvantages now accompany such fertile unions. Whereas traditionally the prolonged dependence on their parents instilled an attitude of indebtedness and filial piety into the children, who then went on to help their parents in production, nowadays many children feel that they are treated unfairly, even exploited, when their parents demand help from them, especially when their friends are receiving help to continue with their education.

The young men's absence from their fathers' farms is only one aspect of the general weakening of the traditional authority structures. In rural places like Iganna, the king and the chiefs, as well as parents and elders, are still respected and approached in a deferential way according to Yoruba etiquette; but when it comes to issuing orders and to getting things done, it becomes obvious that the people occupying the traditional positions of authority no longer have the means of compelling obedience from those under them, either by persuasion or by threat of punishment, in the way they could in the past. As

one old man remarked, "formerly whenever the Sabiganna sent one of his ilari (retainer) to call me, I would immediately put on my agbada (gown) and rush to the palace. But if he calls me now, I would tell his ilari that I am busy, and that maybe I shall go and see him tomorrow". In a similar mood, other informants commented that no baale should try to order them around. When I asked why the surroundings of so many compounds were in such an appalling state of untidiness, adding provocatively that I thought that occasionally the bale would call a corvée party to clear the compound premises, my interlocutors retorted "Why should we do so, since the bale is too poor to provide food and drink when we work for him? No, nowadays 'the time of money has arrived and every man just takes care of his own apartment' (aiye owo ti de, olukaluku maa ntoju ojule re)".

As a result of these changed attitudes, those in positions of authority tend to refrain from issuing orders they can no longer enforce. Symptomatic of this erosion of the traditional authority structure is, for example, the state of the royal palace, which is so run down that it may collapse at any time; not a single Iganna citizen, however, is bothering to lift a finger to repair it. Nevertheless, the Iganna people continue to prostrate themselves in front of the kings as they used to in the past.

It is in keeping with their loss of power that elders and parents often prefer to adopt a more permissive attitude towards their children, letting them go their own way, especially when this means that no money is spent on their schooling. Occasionally, though, confrontations do take place, and then youngsters openly flout parental authority. I recorded one dramatic instance of this during the Muslim Ilea festival in 1974, when



some Iganna boys who had come home from Lagos for the celebrations were told by their fathers to stay home and help on the farm instead of squandering their time and money in the city. The boys showed no compunction, but answered back, in abusive language, that no one was going to stop them, upon which they walked off to the motor park to catch the bus for the city.

Instances of boys and girls going against the express wishes of their parents abound these days, especially in matters of choosing a marriage partner. This is illustrated by the case of a girl who informed her father that she wanted to marry a certain young Igannan. When her father refused to give his consent on the grounds that the prospective groom was a blood relation (ebi), the girl simply went to her boyfriend and asked him to keep her locked up in his room for a week. When she returned home she lied at first, saying that she had been to Ilero to visit an aunt; but when some months later it became obvious that she was pregnant, she confessed that she had been with her boyfriend. Her parents had no choice then but to consent to the match.

Among the migrants in the city the situation is even more advanced; they marry without their parents' consent or knowledge, and the brides even keep the bridewealth themselves. To the extent, then, that young people are able to make a living independently of their parents and elders, the former relations of domination are weakened, and young people become less obedient and willing to help with farming, or in any other way. However, in asserting their independence young people do not really replace old institutions with new ones; the general pattern of change is one in which young people simply quit the parental environment, either by emigrating or by obtaining their

own plots of farm land from friends or relatives away from their fathers. As a result, the older households and the community at large are being drained of their most vigorous and productive elements. Thus the elders may hold on to their titles and offices, but the real basis for power and authority which depends on one's ability to "tie", to "win" other people as producers of wealth, has slipped out of their hands.

In the past it was always the farmers rather than the hunters, the craftsmen or the traders, who dominated the centre of the political arena and filled the chiefly and royal offices. In today's modern nation state, however, the centre of political power has moved away from the farmers, and representation in it or access to it is denied them; thus they are developing, as Williams and Beer have argued, into a peasantry (1976:152-4, *passim*).

## 1.2 Hired labour and increased cashcropping

The growing commercialisation of agricultural production in Iganna can be seen generally in the more intensive use which is made of the available labour and land resources, and more specifically in the use of hired labour. In spite of the on-going emigration to the cities by young people over the last few decades, foodcrop production in the area has not declined; on the contrary, outputs seem to be higher now than ever before. Although no statistical data exist that would allow a precise assessment of annual crop output, increased production is suggested by the following observations. First, the influx of many non-native farmers who have settled on Iganna land has, according to the population estimates on table 1, to a large extent counterbalanced the exodus by Igannans. Secondly, average farm sizes in the distant farming zone around Iganna now measure from three to four acres, whereas formerly farms rarely



exceeded two acres, and were made mostly in the immediate surroundings of the town. Thirdly, plots under cultivation are now made to carry two or more crops, whereas formerly Iganna farmers grew only one crop per plot<sup>2</sup>. Fourthly, whereas in the past farmers often stayed at home for days on end in order to participate in various compound or town activities (orisa festivals, funerals etc.), nowadays fulltime farmers usually stay in the outlying farming hamlets for the greater part of the year, coming home only exceptionally. As a result of this, the total amount of working time individual farmers devote to cultivation tends to be much greater than before.

Finally, the contribution of the agatu to the total labour output is very high. According to Johnson, a farmer's average daily work output amounts to clearing about three hundred mounds (ebe). Although in Iganna it was not uncommon for farmers to clear as many as four hundred mounds a day, this amount was still nowhere as near as the work output of the agatu, who often cleared six hundred or more mounds in one day. No doubt the fact that they are paid by the piece rather than by the hour encourages the agatu to increase their productivity, and many of these migrant labourers can stand up to the rigours of such intensive work only by taking amphetamines bought from Yoruba medicine pedlars<sup>3</sup>.

As a Westerner I had for a long time looked upon the modern transition to using hired labour as a rather straightforward instance of wage labour which had come to the Iganna area to fill the vacuum created by the youth exodus to the cities. In this sense the Iganna farmer who hires the services of the agatu enters with them into an employer-employee relationship, with a view to maximising his profit margins by cashcropping. Although this assessment is not incorrect, what actually happens

in the present situation is that for many Iganna farmers hired labour results in indebtedness, which in turn decreases their chances of realising good profits. I shall explain this process more fully later on; here I will simply mention how this indebtedness comes about. When the time comes to pay off the agatu (usually at the end of the rainy season in October), farmers are only just beginning to sell their new crops; as most of them are at that time of the year short of cash, they are forced to seek credit (usually from their women-traders) in order to pay the agatu's wages.

Although the agatu make up an external labour force which is radically different from the traditional labour pool, their status in Iganna is complicated by the fact that farmers tend to look on them as iwofa: in discussions with the farmers I realised that agatu labour was not seen by them as replacing their sons' labour, but as replacing iwofa labour. The use of hired labour, just like the possession of debt-labourers in the old days, imparts prestige. While the agatu are on hire by a farmer, he feeds them and instructs them about their work; in this sense some outward resemblance with the iwofa-olowo relationship is maintained, but beyond this point one can see only dissimilarities, the most radical of which are the following. First, the iwofa constituted a labour force of native producers (largely made up of farmers' sons pawned to creditors), whereas the agatu are all non-natives. In fact, as a labour force which is recruited from outside Yorubaland, the agatu bear a greater resemblance to slaves than to iwofa: but nowadays slavery is no longer a subject to be mentioned, and in any case the comparison, just as with the iwofa, is only partially meaningful.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, whereas the iwofa related to his olowo as a debtor to



a creditor, the agatu is in no way personally "tied" to or "won" by the farmer who hires his services; on the contrary, it seems to be the other way round. As an independent contractor, the agatu extends "credit" in the form of labour: his terms of contract are free board and lodging while he works, as well as a previously agreed wage after completion of the work. The cost of agatu labour used to be calculated according to a fixed price (for example, 40 Kobo for clearing two hundred mounds); but as a result of the rising cost of living in recent years, many agatu prefer the system of bargaining before taking on a new job. Thus, while the money invested in obtaining iwofa labour was ultimately returned to the farmer-olowo, the money now spent on hiring agatu can only be recovered if profits on the sales of farm produce are good. As I shall discuss further on in this chapter, however, those who make the best profits on farm produce are not necessarily the producers themselves, but more usually the traders.

Finally, the ambiguous status of the agatu in Iganna is most strongly demonstrated in the way they spend their money. The local farmers usually spend any cash earnings on paying back debts or meeting current household expenses; the agatu, however, who are mainly young men living away from home, have no such obligations. Thus they can often be seen indulging in life's luxuries, spending a lot of money at the local beer parlours, or on buying cassette recorders, transistor radios, bicycles or light motorcycles. I also recorded instances of more thrifty labourers who saved up money to invest back home, while on the other hand some Bariba labourers from Benin, after a few years' hard work, managed to obtain some forest land southwest of Iganna, on which they started growing their own cocoa.

In conclusion, then, the conservative farmers' view of the

agatu as a latter-day iwofa has no real foundation, since the modern farm labourer is in no way comparable to a debtor or a pawn. Even the observer's view of the agatu as an employee who sells his labour can be misleading, since in the local context the shortage of indigenous farm labour means that the agatu has a fair amount of bargaining power over his employers, a kind of labour credit which he can extend or withhold. At the same time, the system of marketing farm produce often affects the farmer employing hired labour adversely in terms of profit making; I shall discuss this last point in more detail in the following sections.

## 2. Women and the farm produce trade

The new role played by women in the farm produce trade, no less than the use of hired labour, is responsible for the radical changes in the relations of production in rural Iganna. For the women, the inclusion of farm produce in the expanding range of their trading activities is only one factor among many contributing to their emancipation in modern times. For the farmers, however, the women's independent role as farm produce traders has meant that they (the farmers) have lost control over both the distribution of their produce and their women. Thus the principle that the producer controls the co-producers until the product has been distributed (in this case, until the farm produce has been sold) is being systematically bypassed under the impact of commercial farming.

### 2.1 Trading foodstuffs in Iganna

How large a number of Iganna women make a living by trading and processing farm produce is hard to assess. Sudarkasa, basing herself on fieldwork done in Awe (a small town near Oyo)



between 1961-2 estimates that "the women who regularly trade farm products between Awe and Lagos or Ibadan do not number more than a dozen" (1973:76). My observations in Iganna revealed the higher number of 30 to 50 women engaged in the long distance trade, though the scope and regularity of their trading varied much from one to the other. Apart from these long distance traders, many women trade in farm produce locally: Iganna women who live on the farms with their husbands often buy crops from neighbouring farmers, and after processing them partially sell them to other traders. The more mobile traders are usually based in Iganna, visiting the outlying farms and periodic markets regularly in order to buy foodstuffs from the farmers, or partly processed crops from their womenfolk. From there the crops are taken by lorry to Iganna town, where they are either marketed locally or taken to the distant city markets. At each of these stages there may be other traders who enter the chain of the middle trade. Again, other traders in Iganna (often elderly women working with just a small trading capital) sit on the roadside outside the town and buy small quantities of crops from the returning farmers, which they later retail in the town markets.

Many of these women who go round buying farm produce from the producers also process crops to yam flour, cassava meal and other types of foodstuffs, or sell cooked food. Now that grinding machines have taken over most of the lengthy preparations involved in the processing of crops, occupational specialisation among women has increased greatly, and less time is expended on the more traditional household chores.

Only exceptionally do Iganna women market their own husbands' farm produce, although they had always done so traditionally. Women may, however, still help their husbands by giving them

information on current market prices and advice as to when they should sell their crops, since they usually have more knowledge about these matters than the men. On several occasions I noticed that a farmer would ask his wife to accompany him to the market, in the hope that her presence might deter the traders from driving too hard a bargain.

Thus, whereas in the old days women acted as farmers' household dependants, they are now independent brokers who transact business without being personally tied through kinship or other links of dependency to the producers. After buying the crops the modern trader has, in principle, the freedom to explore where and when they could be most advantageously sold, although in practice this freedom may be restricted by various factors, especially the size of her capital. Experienced traders working with large capitals can make best profits by buying crops early in the season after harvest time, and delaying the sales in the urban markets until scarcity has set in and prices begin to rise. To illustrate this point I have plotted on a graph the monthly rate of inflation of some staple foodstuffs on the Ibadan markets in Orita-merin, as at 1974-5 (table 12). As well as suffering from the same annual inflation as other commodities in recent years, the seasonal price fluctuations of foodstuffs, as can be seen from the graph, are closely connected with the agricultural cycle, so much so that towards the end of the rainy season when there is an abundance of freshly harvested crops prices are relatively low; by the beginning of the new year, however, with the dry season well under way, crop scarcity sets in and prices shoot up. Yam flour, as can be seen on the graph, trebled in price in the nine months between October 1974 and June 1975.



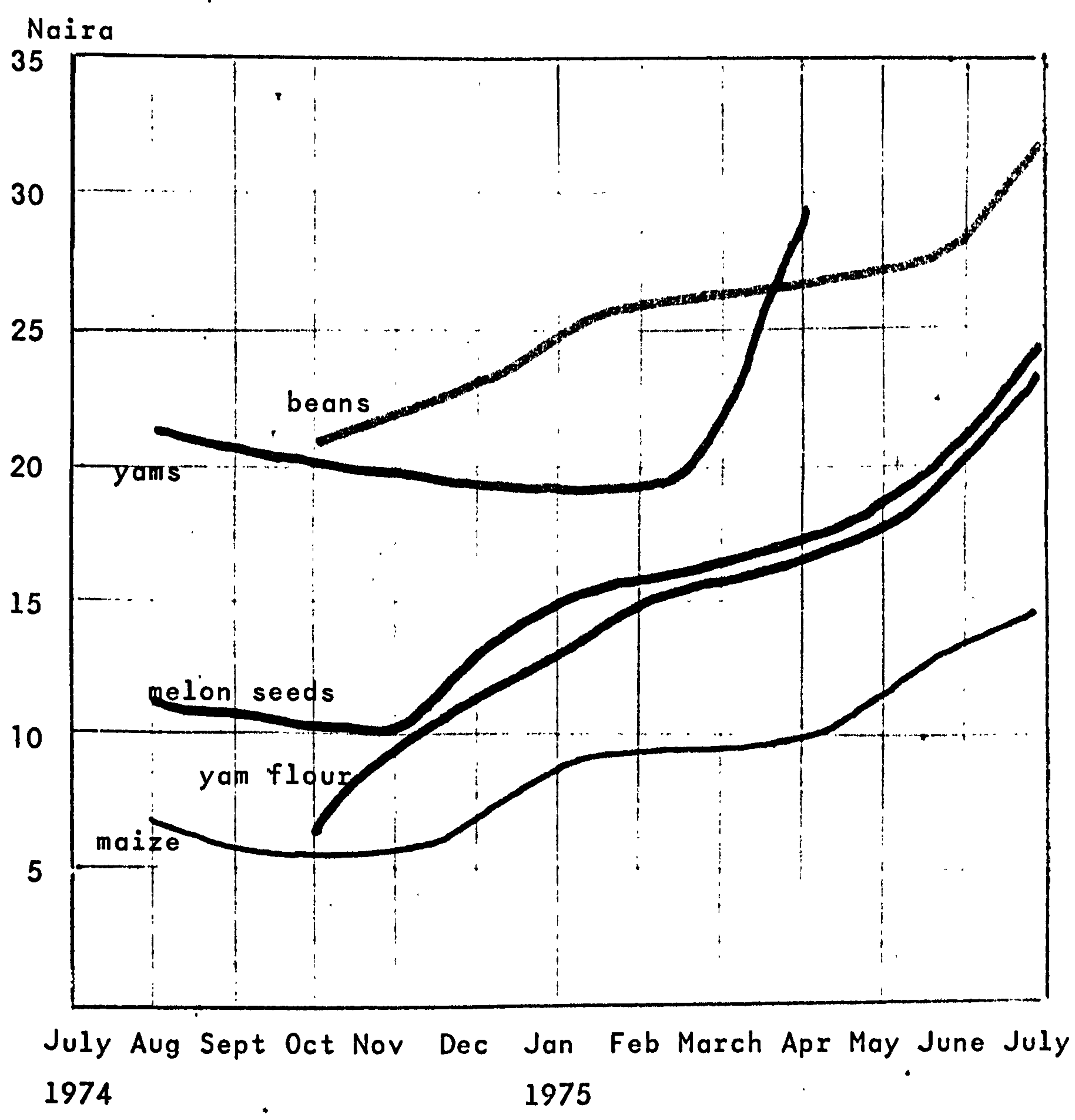


Table 12 Seasonal fluctuations in farm produce prices

## 2.2 Commercial farming viewed through traditional glasses

The fact that the ordinary Iganna farmer now depends for the sales of his cash crops on the services of women outside his household rather than on his own wives can be correlated with the weakening of the men's authority over their womenfolk and the breakup of the household as a cooperative unit of agricultural production.

These changing relations, however, just as those resulting from the transition from farm labour provided by the farmers' sons to that of the agatu, are not always so apparent in practice. The realities of the changed relations between farmers and their women are largely disguised by the formal persistence of most of the traditional institutions underpinning men's authority over women, and by the fact that Yoruba women have always engaged in occupations of their own: they have been renowned as traders for many generations, and the current specialisation by many in the expanding farm produce trade may seem perfectly consistent with the expansion of trade in general. Women's running of the middle trade in farm produce is a development which, as I have shown in the previous chapter, has come about gradually, through a process of indigenous adaptations to meet the growing demand for foodstuffs in the distant markets; it has not triggered off a radical restructuring of the rural community. It is therefore not surprising that the local farmers, who more than anybody else are rooted in the traditional way of life, should view agatu labour through the iwofa institution, and the activities of the women traders as a continuation of the old-time marketing activities of their womenfolk.

Nevertheless, when we contrast the present-day position of Iganna women with their position before the time of commercial farming we cannot fail to notice the radical changes which



have taken place in the relations of production.

## 2.21 Farmer-trader relations

Although farm produce is often sold to any trader who offers a good price, most farmers maintain regular links with one or more traders who sell their crops in the distant markets. It is mainly such links that keep up the semblance that sales agents are employed in the way they were by the big farmer-entrepreneurs in the early decades of this century. As the regular traders do not usually buy from their farmer-customers by agreeing on a price when the crops are collected (as is normally the case) but more often by taking the foodstuffs and settling accounts only after they have been sold in the city, the transaction tends to look like one in which the farmer is paying commission to the trader and reimbursing her expenses. In actual fact, however, it is the trader who decides how much the farmer will receive from the proceeds of the sales, and the true amount of the "commission" she keeps is something the farmer can only guess at. As a result of this, disagreements between farmers and their traders over the profits made on crop sales may sometimes occur. I personally witnessed a dispute between a farmer and a trader who maintained that she had sold his maize crop in Lagos for eight Naira per bag, whereas he had expected ten Naira, which was the rumoured price for this crop at that time. The trader justified herself by claiming that customers had refused to pay the higher price because of the poor quality of the maize. Eventually some elders present mediated in the dispute, but the farmer's suspicions that the trader had cheated him were not allayed, and he subsequently refused to do further business with her.

Although relationships between farmers and traders do not always end in overt disputes, there is a general feeling among

older men in Iganna that these women who make their living by trading farm produce have in fact taken over a domain which used to be under their control. During many discussions about the past they would say "l'aiye atijo ko si onisowo", "in the old days there were no traders". By this they did not mean that there was no trading in the past, but that these women traders in farm produce did not exist. Thus the farmers are aware that through their control in the middle trade in farm produce these women exert considerable control over them, the producers, who now depend on their assistance.

2.22 Divorce and wives' independence of their husbands      The struggle between men and women for the control of the proceeds of cashcropping is more radically manifested in conflicts between husbands and wives than in the occasional disagreements between farmers and their traders. That is not to say that husband-wife disputes were not common in the past; but nowadays they may often lead to divorce, whereas such systematic break-up of households would not have been feasible in the past. Legally, wives have been able to divorce their husbands on their own accord since the establishment of the Native Courts in 1914, but in Iganna women started to make use of this right only gradually: above all, it is by asserting their increasing economic self-sufficiency that women have become less hesitant in seeking a divorce when they felt dissatisfied with their marriage.

Husbands and wives do not share a common budget, and the husband is expected to provide the capital to set his wife up in a craft or a trade of her own. The small farmer who spends the greater part of the year in a remote farm settlement is thus more in danger of losing his wife to a rich man or to a migrant, who can 'free' her from the drudgery and isolation of



farm life and help start her off in trade in the town or the city.

This was often the angle from which male informants accounted for the frequency of divorce nowadays. "Our women do not like to be left on the farm, where there is no scope for trading", some said, while others put it more crudely: "our women do not marry for love, but for money. They just want an important (affluent) husband (bko pataki)"; someone who will give them money to buy nice clothes, and help them to start trading". In the customary court proceedings the women, on their part, usually gave as reason for seeking a divorce the "neglect" and "hardship" suffered at the hands of their husbands. This they would substantiate by claims that their husbands repeatedly failed to provide them with the money needed for household tasks, or else that they squandered money on other women.

My own observations did not allow any statistical conclusions to be drawn on whether or not divorce rates in recent years have been higher among farmers than among craftspeople, traders or migrants. What I did establish, however, was that many of the Iganna farmers I knew (51 percent in a random sample of 73) had been married to women who, after divorcing them, emigrated to Ibadan or Lagos, or else became full-time traders in Iganna, thanks to the help received from their new husbands.<sup>5</sup>

The immediate effect which the transition from traditional agricultural production to modern commercial farming has had on the Igannans is twofold: while farmers have been increasing cash crop production and thus also their money returns, women have found more scope for their trading and other occupations, with the result that their incomes are now higher.<sup>6</sup> On the whole, however, viewed in the context of the traditional

institutions still prevailing in Iganna, these quantitative changes have been more rewarding for the women than for the men. A large number of wives and children is still an index of a man's affluence and prosperity; but whereas in the old days the money invested in acquiring wives could be viewed as profitable in the long term, insofar as it was aimed at enlarging his labour force of household dependants, nowadays little

economic support can be expected from either wives or children. While the children tend to emigrate and marry at an early age, the acquisition and maintenance of wives involves an ongoing expenditure without substantial rewards for the farmer, either in terms of productivity (since his wife no longer markets his products) or in terms of loyalty (since she may divorce him when dissatisfied).

Women, however, continue to demand financial help from their husbands in accordance with old established customs. No matter how much a woman may earn she will still expect her husband to provide most of what is needed to run the household (foodstuffs from the farm, money to buy ingredients or cooked food from food sellers, etc.). A woman also expects financial help from her husband in setting up her own business. Women who trade in farm produce are no exceptions to these expectations, even though they will use the capital received from their husbands to market other farmers' products.

Although the day to day profits Iganna women make in trading may be small, their incomes are nevertheless fairly steady throughout the year. Farmers, on the other hand, often obtain large money returns from cash cropping, but these incomes are irregular, depending on the agricultural cycle. Moreover, their overheads, household and other expenses are higher than those of the women.



In conclusion, then, I have tried to show that while wives and children are still in a position to demand financial assistance from the householder (which he, by custom, is expected to render), in his own capacity as a farmer the householder can no longer enforce counter claims to secure the cooperation and loyalty of his wives and children. It is in this sense that the relationship of a farmer with his household dependants turns into a form of social indebtedness.

### 3. Women as creditors

Unlike money borrowed from moneylenders ("olowo"), for which debt labour had to be performed or on which interest was (and is) charged, credit which farmers now obtain from their regular traders takes the form of a nominally interest-free advance payment on cash crops still to be harvested. By thus pledging the product of his labour to a trader the farmer disguises his condition as a debtor, often even to himself.

In the following I shall illustrate that the implications of such a relationship are, firstly, that such credit tends to reduce the profit margins of the farmer while increasing those of the trader, and secondly, that the practice has an adverse effect on the traditional authority structures as well as on social solidarity within the household and in the community at large.

#### 3.1 Cash cropping and indebtedness as a way of life

Apart from the problem of finding the ready cash to pay the agatu's wages before the beginning of the annual droughts, farmers are also faced with many traditional major expenditures, especially those involved in funeral and marriage celeb-

rations. As these festivities last for several days, there is hardly any time during the year in which there is no drumming, dancing and feasting in at least one compound. Some people still spend a lot of money on initiations into the orisa cults, while others prefer to spend it on non-traditional pursuits, such as the education of their children.

As the amount of cash needed for any of these single items of expenditure is often far in excess of the immediate capacity of most ordinary people, the continuous creation and recreation of relations of indebtedness cannot be considered a thing of the past. In fact, the system of saving money in esusu ("money pooling") societies with a view to raising the funds needed to pay back previously incurred debts is still deeply rooted in Iganna, partly as a culturally accepted way of life and partly, for most ordinary people, out of necessity.

The incentive to save money in such a way that it pays dividends (traditional esusu societies pay no dividends) came to Iganna in 1970 through the Cooperative Thrift and Credit societies. The cooperative movement has since been spreading fast in the area: in 1975 there were as many as six of these societies in Iganna, with a total membership of over three hundred men and women.

These credit societies, however, give loans only for projects deemed by them to be profitable (as, for instance, fund-raising to set oneself up in trade, or the payment of school fees or hired labour, which increase cash crop production). No loans are given for such "unprofitable" projects as conducting ceremonies for a newborn baby or a dead parent. But since people cannot live in Iganna without at some time being faced with some such unprofitable social investment, alternative methods



of raising cash have to be resorted to. It is in these circumstances that farmers pledge their crops to traders in return for advance payments. They can after all no longer pawn their children to the big farmer-creditors, while engaging in debt-labour themselves (in the form of a lo'ko bo - see VI:1.42) would take them away from their own farm at a time when the rising cost of living calls for increased cash crop production. Left with the choice between moneylenders and traders, farmers plumb for the traders, since their credit is, at least nominally, interest-free.

Anyone acquainted with Yoruba farmers knows that they may readily make generous gifts, shower one with hospitality, or even pay contributions in kind (that is, from their own produce); but they will often do anything possible to avoid cash expenditure. As a farmer once said to me when an appeal was made in the town of Oyan to help the victims of the 1966 social disturbances in Northern Nigeria, "we would rather contribute two yams each than pay the two shillings which we might get from selling the yams". Unlike crops, which farmers can produce in abundance, money is obtained through market transactions which according to the traditional division of labour belong to the domain of the traders. As long as the land provides them with basic subsistence products farmers feel reasonably secured of their livelihood, even if they have outstanding debts which will require a long time to be paid back.

For the farm produce traders it is often advantageous to make advance payments to farmers, as they are then in a position to exert strong pressure on the farmer to speed up harvesting and make the pledged crops available. But once the trader is in possession of the crops, she can delay selling until prices are at their highest. More often, however, her own capital is at

a low ebb, and she has to sell right away in order to replenish it. This was the case with all the Iganna women traders that I met, none of whose trading capital was large enough to allow long-term hoarding of crops. They did, however, sometimes keep goods for several weeks before selling them in Ibadan or Lagos, and at a time when prices are going up rapidly this meant an additional profit of several Naira on the price agreed on with the farmer.

Although farmers also try to keep their crops until prices are high, they are often forced to sell earlier. This happens especially during the dry season, when cash is needed to pay the agatu and to finance festivities.<sup>8</sup> Most traditional social obligations in the form of feasting are discharged at that time, since food is plentiful and there is little work to be done on the farm. The farmers, pressed for cash, pledge their crops to the traders, thus forfeiting their chances of obtaining a better price later. Consequently, the claim that a trader's advance payment to a farmer is like an interest-free loan conceals the reality that this is the mechanism whereby traders cream off the profits that would otherwise have gone to the farmers.

### 3.2 Sexual antagonism and the erosion of traditional authority

I mentioned earlier the tendency to play down the farmers' dependence on the women traders by considering these traders as mere sales agents. Even when a farmer becomes financially indebted to his regular trader, their relationship is not overtly acknowledged as a debtor-creditor one (except if the relationship breaks down, as for instance when the farmer fails either to give the trader the crops which he had pledged, or to refund her in cash). The trader may be referred to as onisowo ("trader"), or more descriptively as obinrin t'o ndi apo ("women who



tie bags". This refers to the present-day custom of bulking crops like maize, millet and beans in large bags), but never as olowo, in spite of the fact that most long-distance traders in farm produce regularly make advance payments to farmers. Thus these women, even in their capacity as creditors, are culturally not put on a par with either the traditional olowo who recruited iwofa in return for cash loans, or the present-day olowo who charge interest on loans.

The rationale which some informants gave for not calling the middle-traders in farm produce olowo was that it is quite a common practice to allow good customers to buy on credit, and this in itself does not make the trader into an olowo. But such a justification can only account for the cases in which the trader pays the farmer after selling his crops, not before. The category of regular traders known to the farmer as his oni-bara ("customer" - see Trager 1976:212) becomes ambiguous when the trader, instead of buying the farmer's crops on credit, extends credit to him.

Since women's new roles as traders in farm produce and suppliers of credit clash with traditional norms and expectations of women and their role in the household, this leads to ambiguities underlying to a large extent the antagonisms between the sexes. In order to avoid serious marital conflicts, farmers prefer not to do business with their own wives. As one farmer explained to me, "...our women are not trustworthy. That is why a husband will not agree to deal with his wife, because there is no way to make her speak the truth about how sales are. Sometimes she can complain about the sales even when they are good. That is why most of us prefer to deal with another woman-trader".

This suspiciousness between the sexes works both ways, and women

also prefer not to trade with their husbands. According to one woman, "if the husband were to borrow money from his wife, and if he promised to give it back in kind, in melon seeds or maize for instance, he will not give it in time of need and fighting will not solve the problem. Sometimes it can take many years before the money is refunded. So because of this, if the husband needs some money to borrow his wife will not lend him in return for crops. If he borrows from her he must return in cash". Further investigation revealed that these loans to be refunded in cash do not occur frequently either between couples, and certainly not involving large sums of money. What is not uncommon, though, is for husbands to buy goods such as cigarettes or palm wine on credit from their wives, just as other customers do (Sudarkasa 1973:120). Women traders in farm produce, however, seldom extend credit to their husbands.

Although the preference of women traders for conducting business with farmers other than their husbands avoids some marital conflicts, it also creates new ones, especially as a result of jealousy (of both forms: sexual, and envy). Farmers envy their trader-wives' steadier incomes and lighter responsibilities, claiming that "women have less responsibilities to carry in the family affairs. In this way women are keeping their own money and they are always rich". Others add, defensively, "....anyway, men are the roots under the trees. Out of what a man sows his family will eat and be fed".

Clearly such views smack of androcentrism, and ignore the basic fact that the large sums of money traders handle are not pure profit, but need constant re-investing. Extending credit in the form of advance payments to farmers is no exception to such requirements if a woman wants to stay in business. Yet men are



quickly provoked to jealousy when their wives make loans to other men. One informant gave a graphic account of what might happen in such cases.

These things usually cause jealousy and fighting between men and women. Because if any man borrowed some money from a woman trader and the money or the crops are not given back soon, the husband will be jealous and nag his wife, saying "those men are your boyfriends, they always borrow and never have to pay back...". And if the woman is not patient it can cause a very serious fight.

Finally, it should be pointed out that a farmer resents asking his wife for a loan as this would impair his authority as head of the household. The men will therefore often try to gain access to their wives' money by stealthier means. As one man told me quite unequivocally, "when a husband needs money he will be too proud to go and borrow from his wife. Although women are wise to cheat the men, the men have a wise way to trick the women whenever they need money from them".

#### 4. Conclusion

Sexual antagonism is not new to Iganna. Women's ability to keep their money separate from their husbands' always harboured the seeds of conflict. But whereas traditionally a woman's trading activities were kept quite distinct from and subordinate to the domain of male productivity in agriculture, these boundaries and hierarchies have broken down since the women's taking over of the middle trade in farm produce. As a result, men have become increasingly dependent on/indebted to their women-folk, both for the sale of their products and for the provision of the credit needed to help them out of their chronic cash shortages.

The general situation of dependence and indebtedness in which Iganna farmers find themselves was examined also from the point of view of farm labour. Here it was pointed out that increased cash crop production requires the use of hired labour. Yet while hiring the services of the agatu may make up for the loss of the farmers' sons, it is at the same time a further incentive for the young men to emigrate, since agatu labour is paid while their own is not.

Hired labour is expensive, and farmers often have to incur debts in order to pay their labourers' wages. This, in addition to the many other reasons for incurring debts, increases their dependence on the traders who can supply them with credit. Thus the present-day system of commercial farming in Iganna results in the farmers' increasing dependence on, and indebtedness to, co-producers who are outsiders to the farmers' household units. This in turn weakens the farmers' authority and hold over their own dependants (wives, children). In this sense one may say, then, that the more a farmer goes in for commercial farming, the more social solidarity and cooperation within the traditional household unit tend to break down.

Thus rural-urban migration is here viewed from a different perspective than the one presented in the first part of this thesis (in terms of the attraction of the cities and the "quest for money" incentive). Under the impact of commercial farming which developed largely in response to demands for food crops in the urban areas, the relations of production in rural communities like Iganna have been changing; these changes erode social solidarity, thereby driving many people (especially the youth) away from home.

Most significant in this analysis is the close connection



between the exercise of power and authority (as the basis for social solidarity and the maintenance of the relations of domination) on the one hand, and the control of credit on the other. Whereas formerly the control of credit was tied in with the traditional chieftaincy structure, culminating in the office of the king, nowadays the traditional centre no longer controls credit. Instead, credit is obtained largely from outside the community, through cooperatives, long-distance traders, and others.

## NOTES

1. Censuses I made in the secondary modern schools, which offer three-year post-primary courses, revealed that over a hundred Iganna boys and girls attended these schools in Okeho and Iseyin between 1955 and 1974, whereas less than fifty went on to grammar school in Okeho.
2. This point, which was much stressed by the Iganna elders, has also been observed in other parts of Yorubaland. It should be mentioned, however, that this more intensive exploitation of plots under cultivation can lead to smaller yields in the long run.
3. I recorded on a few occasions cases of young labourers who fell ill as a result of over-exertion. Disputes between the agatu and their bosses over exploitative wages and bad working conditions also occur frequently.
4. Referring to someone as being of slave origin is tantamount to a criminal offence. In discussions of the iwofa institution, however, informants did not usually mind broaching the subject, even those who had served as pawns themselves.
5. Legally there is little men can do to prevent their wives from divorcing them in the customary courts. Nevertheless, many cult and voluntary associations forbid men to seduce each other's wives on pain of expulsion. Such prohibitions certainly curb the divorce rates somewhat, but they are not always rigorously adhered to, as the following incident demonstrates. During the annual festival in October 1974 of the orisa Oduduwa, a dispute arose over the presence at the Ifa grove of one Babalawo (diviner) who had been expelled from the confraternity five years ago, following his seduction of a colleague's wife. After heated arguments among the men present the case was brought to the senior members for arbitration. Here it was decided that the erring Babalawo should be allowed to take part in the festivities that year, since throughout the years following his expulsion he continued to pay the fortnightly membership dues through the mediation of other members.
6. Exact figures on incomes of farmers and traders were difficult to obtain. In the absence of even the most rudimentary form of book-keeping, the people themselves had no clear idea as to their money turnovers. Moreover, suggestions I made to otherwise dependable and cooperative informants to write down, for their benefit as well as mine, their daily cash incomes and expenditures, were always strongly opposed. An obvious reason for such opposition was the people's fear that leakages of their cash incomes, especially if they



happened to exceed the annual total of ₦ 100, would expose them to higher rates of tax assessment which, as Beer says, "is often an arbitrary process, sometimes politically biased and often vindictive" (1976:164).

A flat-rate tax of ₦ 4 per head is levied on all men whose cash incomes are below ₦ 100 a year. Women earning less than this amount are exempt from tax payment. From figures obtained on food expenses, however, it can easily be shown that even the ordinary Iganna farmer earns more than double the flat-rate tax level. In eight Iganna households averaging five members, an average of 15 Kobo per person per day was spent on food. (A similar sample of sixteen households in the nearby town of Iwere-ile yielded almost the same result, viz. 14 kobo per person - see Dilworth, 1973:13). Thus, just to stay above the breadline a household of four would require at least ₦ 219 annually, and a household of six as much as ₦ 328.50. Most of these expenses have to be met by the householders, though wives may also spend some of their own money on buying subsidiary foodstuffs (salt, pepper, oil, etc.).

7. How much farmers owe to the agatu obviously depends on how much work the latter did for them. When the time to pay wages had come in October 1974, most farmers were trying to raise sums ranging from ₦ 30 - ₦ 40, although according to informants some farmers needed as much as ₦ 100 and more.
8. In Iganna the annual Ifa initiation ceremonies (itefa) take place in November-December. Soon after, in January, marriages are traditionally celebrated. Although death may strike at any time, more elderly people die during the annual droughts than at any other time of the year in rural towns like Iganna. As funeral celebrations invariably constitute a major drain on people's finances, it should be noted that between October 1974 and February 1975 more than 80 funerals took place in Iganna.

## CONCLUSION

My main objective in this thesis has been to analyse how the phenomenon of rural-urban migration in Iganna was related to the processes of change which have come about in the system of agricultural production in the course of this century. These changes relate to what may be described as the transition from production for local consumption within the confines of the rural community and its close environs, to the inclusion of farm produce in the external trade with the growing urban centres. The actual correlations between the migration phenomenon and the commercialisation of agriculture were investigated from three different, though interconnected, angles: demographically, from the point of view of people's own perceptions, and from the point of view of the changes in the relations of production. The demographic approach showed how emigration from Iganna involved mainly young people who since the 1950s have been drifting in large numbers to the urban areas, and how this exodus was counteracted by the influx of farmers from other Yoruba towns as well as labourers from outside Yorubaland. Probing people's perceptions of the reasons behind rural-urban migration revealed the causal link between this phenomenon and commercial agriculture. The many people interviewed on this question regarded farming an unrewarding occupation, while the alternative of going to the cities held for many the promise of a better living.

By retracing the genesis of the youth exodus from Iganna in the post World War II period it was shown that radical changes in the relations of production were taking place in northwestern Yorubaland at the time. Concomitant with the intensification of commercial agriculture there had developed in the country at large an increasing mobility in all factors of production. But while large scale



entrepreneurship, specialised skills and capital investment became concentrated in selected areas, especially in the rapidly growing urban centres, mobility of the factors of production in rural areas like Iganna was largely restricted to labour. Therefore, inasmuch as the young migrants constituted a category of potentially highly productive people, eager to develop new (non-agricultural) skills, the phenomenon of rural-urban migration was consistent with the intensification of agricultural production on the one hand, and the processes of rapid urban growth on the other. In order to clarify this point, and to explain the relative lateness of the youth exodus, it should be recalled that the changes in the relations of production (precondition of the mobility of young people's labour) were the outcome of three inter-related processes which had developed in Iganna during the first decades of this century. First there had been the weakening of the loyalty-authority relations between the common people and the chiefs, Sabiganna and Alaafin. Secondly there had been the final breakdown of the creditor-debtor relationship between the big farmers (olowo) and the small farmers, and finally there had been the expansion of the rural marketing system and the emergence of middle-traders-(creditors) for channelling farm produce to the urban markets.

But although commercial farming had got underway in Iganna by the early stages of the colonial era, the youth exodus did not start until about the middle of this century. This means that in the initial period increased productivity did not lead to any basic changes in the relations of production which had developed in pre-colonial times. Within those relations young people could be kept effectively under the authority of their parents-elders, and the common people remained tied to the land for their livelihood. Initially, then, the material wealth which accrued to the big farmer-entrepreneurs from channelling their agricultural surpluses onto the urban markets was absorbed by the pre-colonial system of redistribution within the local community, especially through the iwofa institution. With slavery disappearing fast, the thriving iwofa institution in the first decades

of this century (when the introduction of individual taxation, manufactured commodities and the spread of new currency led to the steady rise in the cost of living) boosted the mechanism through which the big farmers could recruit an extra labour force of debtors for the production of agricultural surplusses. Since the debts which made small farmers enter into iwofa transactions and pawn their children to these big farmer-moneylenders were most often occasioned by the idile obligations of maintaining its symbolic capital of renown and prestige by feasting the ancestors, orisa etc., it can be demonstrated that the dominant idile ideology was still effective in securing the reproduction of the basic conditions for increased productivity in the first stages of this process.

This incipient system of commercial agriculture was, however, inherently unstable. Not only had the customary authority relations been propped up artificially by the colonial policy of Indirect Rule, but as time went on the developments in production, technology, commerce and skills which the colonial era had set in motion came into increasing conflict with the pre-colonial relations of production which had prevailed until then. In Iganna the new forces of change first started to burst through the constraining bonds of the old productive system in the marketing sector, where women traders set themselves up as brokers in farm produce, extending credit to farmers in need of cash. The second decisive blow to the old system of production came through the introduction of wage labour. Significantly, in Iganna agatu labour was hired predominantly by the non-native Yoruba farmers who in the 1940s-50s started settling on land granted to them by the Igannans.

These major innovations constituted a breakthrough under the impact of which the iwofa institution eventually died out. By that stage agricultural production had grown so much in volume, scale and complexity that it had led to qualitative changes in the relations of production, the reproduction of which could no longer be articulated adequately through idile relations. Instead, money returns from cashcropping were



shared out to big and small farmers alike through the external market mechanisms. Moreover, labour services had themselves acquired market value, either in the form of wages paid to the agatu or in the form of commissions on the sales of farm produce kept by the women traders. Thus the dominant role played by the market in the present-day system of commercial agriculture reflects the over-all structural dominance of the economy.

The last remark must not be taken to mean that commercial agriculture in Iganna is characterised by capitalist relations of production, or by what Amin has called "a degenerated agrarian capitalism, corrupted and poor" (1974:104). If capitalist relations of production were to emerge, this would depend in the first place on the separation of the mass of producers from the means of production; but as long as Iganna peasant smallholders continue to farm on their idle land, with their own tools, such separation is unlikely to occur. On the other hand, it should not be inferred from the fact that Iganna farmers produce partly for their own maintenance that they straddle two economies, viz. a subsistence or traditional economy and a market or modern one. I have argued that, if "subsistence" production is to contrast with "surplus" and/or "cashcrop production", at no time in history have Igannans been merely subsistence agriculturalists. This could be gathered from the developments in pre-colonial trade and the collection of tributes and various kinds of levies, all of which played a vital part in the reproduction of the relations of production.

Most importantly, and here lies the crux of the whole argument of this thesis, what the analysis of the present system of commercial agriculture in Iganna has revealed is that the relations of production by which this system is realised are qualitatively different from those prevailing in pre-colonial times and until the youth exodus to the cities. What hinders the transformation of these relations of production into capitalistic ones, in a country which in every other respect seems to be all out for capitalist "development", is what

Kahn rightly refers to as the "low level of development of the productive forces" (1978:112). This is reflected particularly in the limited size of farmers' smallholdings, the use of traditional tools, the lack of technological improvements and more generally the lack of capital investment, either self-generated or invested from outside, privately or through the government.

The major limitations to development (capitalist or other) would therefore seem to lie in the limited potentials for agricultural investment and growth in the traditional system of peasant smallholdings. This should be attributed in the first place to the persistence of the customary land tenure system through which the king and chiefs as well as the various idile have continued to assert their corporate rights in the land. Sales of farming land had not yet been initiated in the 1970s, and Igannans had up to then succeeded in safeguarding their idile patrimonies from alienation to outsiders, in spite of the influx of non-native farmers in the area. By receiving occasional gifts in kind or token payments (isakole) from these settlers on their land Igannans continued to assert their ownership rights. At the same time they were well aware that the presence of the many immigrant farmers was a boon to commercial agriculture.

Having noted the obvious discrepancies between the rather conservative and generally poorer native farmers on the one hand and the often more progressive and better-off non-native farmers in the area on the other, I would suggest that the reason for these discrepancies is related to the fact that the onus of maintaining one's idile's patrimony nowadays weighs more heavily on those who stay home than on those who emigrate. Here it should be recalled that this patrimony includes, apart from material assets, a symbolic capital of renown and prestige. The maintenance of this, especially in the context of orisa festivals, initiation rites and feasts for the dead, is always expensive. For Igannans who stay at home it is very difficult to steer clear of these



never-ending extended idle obligations to spend their hard-earned cash. The further one moves from this orbit of the hometown, the more chances one has of saving up some capital and reinvesting it in a more profitable way.

The prospect of having to respond to idle obligations thus deters many a migrant from returning home. Moreover, the persistence of traditional expectations that accumulated wealth should be extended to others in the home community in the form of credit, at a time when the mechanisms which made "capital go to capital" (as, e.g., the iwofa institution) no longer exist, has left the more affluent Igannans with the fear that failure to redistribute their assets will expose them to victimisation by witches or other malevolent agents.

The productive potentials of peasant smallholdings are further limited by the little scope they offer for mobilising and developing most factors of production. As the simple tools used in farming have so far proved adequate for traditional farming methods of shifting cultivation on small plots cleared in the bush, the incentive for innovation with agricultural machinery, specialised skills or entrepreneurship has not been generated. As long as it remains possible to increase cashcrop production by recruiting hired labour and by exploiting available land resources more intensively it is unlikely that significant technical developments will materialise at the level of production. Even the more affluent farmers in the Iganna area who seemed less constrained by idle obligations were nevertheless limited by the same technologically low level of production as their poorer counterparts.

These inherent limitations of the peasant smallholding system of production keep the farmers as a (potential) class in a situation of structural dependence within the macro socio-economic order. Being subject to the "invisible hand" of market fluctuations, their position of dependence is maintained by their lack of bargaining power and absence of effective grassroots level producers' organisations, as well as their lack of political leverage in relation to the

Government. Although there have been some instances of collective action by Yoruba farmers in response to excessive drops in market prices for their produce, and against over-taxation, on the whole such movements have been of a populist nature, that is short-lived and aimed at remedying some immediate wrong as opposed to fighting for radical structural reforms (see, for instance, Beer and Williams, 1976, on the Agbekoya peasant uprisings in the Ibadan area in the late 1960s).

The distributive sector of commercial agriculture is less hampered by this low level of development of the productive forces that restrain peasant smallholder production, as can be seen in the expansion of rural markets, the proliferation of farm produce traders, the constant flow of cash and developments in road construction and transport services. These discrepancies between production and distribution are consistent with the point made earlier, viz. that what characterises commercial agriculture is that the conditions for reproducing the relations of production are established through the market, thereby reflecting the structural dominance of the economy over peasant production. To the extent, therefore, that the activities of the women traders in farm produce centre on the distributive sector they may indeed be able to assert their relative economic dominance over their menfolk (as producers), even though culturally this may not be recognised as such.

Moreover, the greater scope for development which is being generated in the distributive sector in order to stimulate the flow of agricultural produce to the consumer sectors is directly connected with developments in trade and commerce generally, both within and far beyond the confines of the rural communities. Given the dynamics of such processes of change it is hardly surprising that young people would prefer to commit themselves to occupations and careers that lie within the scope of this developing sector rather than to agricultural production, which seems more and more doomed to stagnate under its own inherent limitations.



## APPENDIX I

Sociological Survey on Migration from the Rural Districts  
to the Cities

## Questionnaire for Students in the Okeho-Iganna Grammar School.

1. NAME (If you prefer to stay anonymous do not write your name).....
2. AGE.....Are you a BOY or a GIRL? (Underline whichever applies)
3. (a) Where did you attend Primary School?.....  
 (b) If you attended Secondary Modern School, state where ..... and for how many years.....  
 (c) In what Form are you now?.....
4. Who is paying for your schooling at present? Do NOT write the name but state:  
 (a) His or her relationship to you.....  
 (b) His or her occupation.....  
 (c) Where he or she works.....
5. Give the following information about your real father and mother:  
 (a) Father  
     His hometown.....  
     His occupation.....  
     His present place of residence.....  
     How many wives.....and how many children..... are under his care?  
     How many of his children are male?.....and how many female? .....  
     What is his religion? (Specify the name of the cult to which he belongs, e.g. Muslim, Cherubim and Seraphim, Shango Worshipper, Egungun Worshipper, Baptist, Catholic etc.).....  
 (b) Mother  
     Her hometown.....  
     Her occupation.....  
     How many of her children are older than you?.....  
     How many are younger?.....
6. About yourself:  
 (a) Where is your "HOME"? Is it your father's compound? Is it the compound of your mother's father? Or is it another compound? (be specific).....  
 (b) When you go on holiday where do you spend most of your time?.....Do you ever spend time on the farm?.....  
 (c) What is your Religion? (be specific).

7. Why do many people move out of the smaller towns nowadays?  
(Put 1 against your first choice, 2 against the second, 3 against the third)
- ( ) Farming requires too hard work for too little money.
  - ( ) Life in the small towns and in the farms is too monotonous and dull.
  - ( ) A person who is successful and makes progress in his hometown is afraid of witches and people who will be jealous of his success and therefore use bad medicine against him.
  - ( ) Other reasons.....
8. Why do many people prefer to live in the big cities?  
(Put 1 against your first choice, 2 against your second, 3 against your third)
- ( ) Because they are looking for jobs.
  - ( ) Because in the city they feel free from the control of their parents, the gossip of neighbours etc.
  - ( ) Because they enjoy the liveliness of the city, the big shops and markets, the parties and places of entertainment etc.
  - ( ) Because they want to become more "civilised".
  - ( ) Other reasons.....
9. Try to imagine where and how you will be by the end of this century. In other words, the question is: "What type of person do you hope to be in about 20 years' time?"  
(For your answers UNDERLINE the suggestions which you like or add others of your own choice)
- (a) Maritally: Boys: To have many wives/few wives (specify how many)...../only one wife.
- Girls: To have a rich husband - My husband must not be rich but he must have a good character.
- I want to be the only wife of my husband - My husband may have other wives, but he must take proper care of me and my children.
- (b) Children: I want to have as many children as possible.
- I want to have a limited number of children (state how many sons.....and how many daughters.....)
- (c) Professionally: State which profession you would choose. (eg. farmer, doctor, teacher, nurse, trader)
- (d) Residence: By the year 2000 I hope I shall be living in: My hometown/a big city/I don't mind where I shall be living provided I can earn sufficient money.
- (e) Money: If I am successful in earning money, I would use it to:



(Put 1 against your first choice, 2 against your second, 3 against your third).

- ( ) Educate my children up to the level of higher professional training.
- ( ) Build a large house in my hometown.
- ( ) Build a large house in another town where there will be plenty of tenants.
- ( ) Spend it to support my Church or Mosque in order to receive God's blessing.
- ( ) Invest it in Banks or Industry in order to help the economic development of Nigeria.
- ( ) Spend it to enjoy the good things of this life.
- ( ) Other suggestions.....



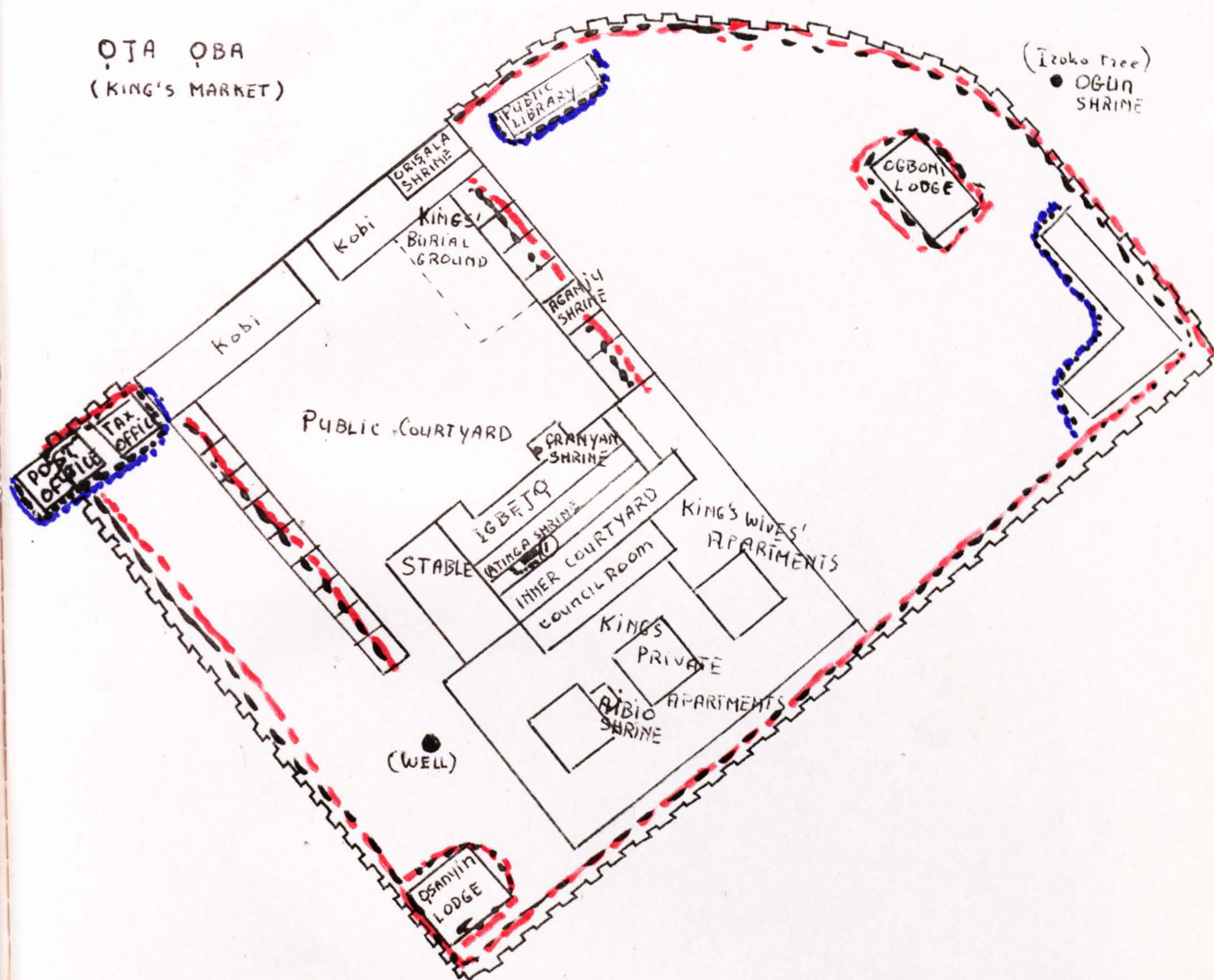


# Appendix III

CUSTOMARY COURT

ỌJA ỌBA  
(KING'S MARKET)

(Izoko tree)  
● OGUN  
SHRINE



0 25 50 metres

Areas reverted to ruins

Modern buildings

Igbejo = place of adjudication

Kobi = additional living quarters; porticos

The layout of the Aafin Iganna (1975)



## APPENDIX IV

Glossary of principal Yoruba words and titles used in text

Note on spelling: The open vowels ɔ and ɛ are spelled o and e, and the sound sh rendered as ʃ. For the names of certain towns, however, both sh and s are often used, e.g. Oshogbo or Oṣogbo.

ààfin	palace
àáró	mutual help association for farm work
àbíkú	sprites associated with certain children who it is believed are born only to die soon afterwards
àgátú	farm labourers from outside Yorubaland
àgbẹ̀	farmer
agbolé	compound (cluster of buildings)
agúmu	powder added to a drink to make medicine
àjo	pooling of money
Aláàfin	title of the king of Oyo (lit. "owner of palace")
baálé	compound head. Also used to refer to any household head or to a landlord
babaláwo	Ifa priest-diviner
bàku	term used to refer to the more recently arrived Fulani pastoralists in the Iganna area
bálẹ̀	title borne by uncrowned kings of certain towns. Also given to headmen of farm settlements
èsúsú	a fund where several persons pool their money
ìdílé	agnatic descent group, patrilineage
ìlárí	palace retainer
ilé	house or home
ìlú	town
isákólẹ̀	fee paid by settler to grantor of land
iwin	bush sprite
ìwòfà	debtor (or his pawn) who renders service for creditor while loan is outstanding
oba	crowned king
ògbóni	powerful secret society with important functions in judicial and governmental affairs
oko	farm
olówó	wealthy person - moneylender
òrìsà	generic name for Yoruba deities
òwẹ̀	<u>ad hoc</u> working party
Ṣabìgànná	title of king of Iganna



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